



Northern Ireland

**Courts and
Tribunals Service**

www.justice-ni.gov.uk/courts-and-tribunals



Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency

Judicial Statistics



2018

Serving the community through the administration of justice

serving the community through the administration of justice

Further Information

For further information on this publication please contact:

Analytical Services Group
Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street
Belfast
BT1 3LA

C Darragh Tel. 028 9072 8927

S Browne Tel. 028 9072 8920

Further information on statistical and research publications can be found at:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

A National Statistics Publication

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

Judicial Statistics was designated as a National Statistics publication by the UK Statistics Authority in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 on 23 July 2012. The assessment report and confirmation letter can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publications-list/?keyword=111&type=&theme=crime-justice&producer=&date=&number=>

It is the Department of Justice's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

For general enquiries about National Statistics, contact the National Statistics Public Enquiry Service on:

Tel: 0845 601 3034
Minicom: 01633815044
E- mail: info@ons.gsi.gov.uk
Fax: 01633 652747
Letters: Customer Contact Centre,

Office for National Statistics,
Room D265,
Government Buildings,
Cardiff Road,
Newport
South Wales
NP10 8XG

You can also find National Statistics on the internet. Go to www.statistics.gov.uk



Index

Introduction

Users

Levels of Reporting

Databases

1. Data sources
2. Data downloads
3. Data validation
4. Quality assurance
5. Data extract
6. Accessibility
7. Comparability
8. Revisions
9. Other Useful Information

Key Highlights

Part A: Court Of Appeal

Key Facts

[Summary Table 1: Court of Appeal 2014 to 2018](#)

Section 1: Criminal appeals

[Table A.1: Criminal appeals lodged and disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table A.2: Types of criminal appeals lodged in 2018](#)

[Table A.3: Results of criminal appeals by type in 2018](#)

Section 2: Civil appeals

[Table A.4: Appeals received and disposed of by origin and type in 2018](#)

Section 3: Court sitting times

[Figure A.1: Number of court sitting days \(majority days\) in the Court of Appeal from 2014 to 2018](#)

Part B: The High Court

Section 1: The Chancery Division

1.1 Key Facts

[Figure B.1: Mortgage cases disposed from 2009 to 2018](#)

[Summary Table 2: Chancery Division cases received 2014 to 2018](#)

[Summary Table 3: Chancery Division cases disposed 2014 to 2018](#)

1.2 Chancery Division - 2018 Data

[Table B.1: Chancery cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.2: Chancery cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.3: Bankruptcy cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.4: Bankruptcy cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.5: Companies cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.6: Companies cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.7: Average time intervals in weeks for business in the Chancery Division in 2018](#)

[Table B.8: Probate grants issued in non-contentious proceedings in 2018](#)

Section 2: The Queen's Bench Division

2.1 Key Facts

[Summary Table 4: Queen's Bench cases received 2014 to 2018](#)

[Summary Table 5: Queen's Bench cases disposed 2014 to 2018](#)

2.2 Queen's Bench Division - 2018 Data

[Table B.9: Queen's Bench cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.10: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses received by amount claimed in 2018](#)

[Table B.11: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses set-down by amount claimed in 2018](#)

[Table B.12: Queen's Bench cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.13: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses disposed by amount in 2018](#)

[Table B.14: Average time intervals in weeks for Queen's Bench cases and applications in 2018](#)

[Table B.15: Queen's Bench commercial actions received in 2018](#)

[Table B.16: Queen's Bench commercial actions set-down in 2018](#)

[Table B.17: Queen's Bench commercial actions disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.18: Average time intervals in weeks for commercial actions in 2018](#)

[Table B.19: Judicial Review applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.20: Judicial Review applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.21: Average time intervals in weeks for Judicial Review applications in 2018](#)

[Table B.22: Masters' appeals received in 2018](#)

[Table B.23: Masters' appeals disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.24: Number of bail applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.25: Number of bail applications disposed of in chambers in 2018](#)

[Table B.26: Number of bail applications disposed of in court in 2018](#)

Section 3: Family Division

3.1 Key Facts

[Summary Table 6: High Court Family cases received 2014 to 2018 Summary](#)

[Table 7: High Court Family cases disposed 2014 to 2018](#)

3.2 Family Division – 2018 Data

[Table B.27: Divorce petitions received in 2018](#)

[Table B.28: Divorce petitions by type of decrees granted in 2018](#)

[Table B.29: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2018](#)

[Table B.30: Matrimonial applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.31: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.32: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2018](#)

[Table B.33: Average time intervals in weeks for matrimonial applications in 2018](#)

[Table B.34: Adoption cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.35: Adoption cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.36: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table B.37: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table B.38: Average time intervals in weeks for Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications in 2018](#)

[Table B.39: Office of Care and Protection – Mental Health proceedings in 2018](#)

[Table B.40: Official Solicitor’s Office – Patient caseload in 2018](#)

[Table B.41: Official Solicitor’s Office – Minors’ caseload in 2018](#)

Section 4: Sitting Days

4.1 Key Facts

[Summary Table 8: High Court Judge Sitting Days 2014 to 2018](#)

4.2 Sitting Days – 2018 Data

[Table B.42 High Court Judges court sitting days and court sitting times in 2018 \(hrs : mins\)](#)

Part C: The Crown Court

Key Facts

[Figure C.1: Crown Court defendants committed and disposed from 2014 to 2018 Summary](#)

[Table 9: Crown Court 2014 to 2018](#)

Crown Court – 2018 Data

Section 1: Cases received and disposed of

[Table C.1: Crown Court cases received in 2018](#)

[Table C.2: Crown Court cases disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table C.3 Defendants committed to Crown Court in 2018](#)

[Table C.4: Crown Court defendants disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 2: Crown Court waiting times

[Table C.5: Average waiting time in the Crown Court in days in 2018](#)

Section 3: Defendants disposed of

[Table C.6: Crown Court defendants disposed of by judge type in 2018](#)

[Table C.7: Crown Court defendants disposed of by charge type in 2018](#)

[Table C.8: Outcome of Crown Court defendants in 2018](#)

Section 4: Crown Court sittings and times

[Table C.9: Crown Court sittings and total Crown Court time in 2018 \(hrs : mins\)](#)

Part D: The County Court

Key Facts

[Summary Table 10: County court cases received 2014 to 2018](#)

[Summary Table 11: County court cases disposed 2014 to 2018](#)

[Figure D.1: Decrees granted in the High Court and County Court from 2014 to 2018](#)

County Court – 2018 Data

Section 1: Appeals from magistrates’ courts

[Table D.1: Appeals received in 2018](#)

[Table D.2: Appeals disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.3: Number of magistrates’ court appeals against conviction and sentence in 2018](#)

[Table D.4: Number of magistrates' court appeals against sentence only in 2018](#)

[Table D.5: Number of magistrates' court civil appeals in 2018](#)

Section 2: Criminal damage cases

[Table D.6: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table D.7: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.8: Time intervals in weeks \(average\) for criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 3: Licences

[Table D.9: Licences received and disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 4: Ordinary civil bills

[Table D.10: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table D.11: Number of ordinary civil bill cases with Notice of Intention to Defend by judicial level in 2018](#)

[Table D.12: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.13: Number of ordinary civil bill cases by amount awarded in 2018](#)

[Table D.14: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.15: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 5: Equity

[Table D.16: Equity cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table D.17: Equity cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.18: Average time intervals in weeks for equity cases disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 6: Ejectment

[Table D.19: Ejectment cases received in 2018](#)

[Table D.20: Ejectment cases disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.21: Average time intervals in weeks for ejectment cases disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 7: Small claims

[Table D.22: Number of small claims cases and applications received in 2018](#)

[Table D.23: Number of small claims cases with a Notice of Dispute received in 2018](#)

[Table D.24: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.25: Average time intervals in weeks for small claims cases disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 8: Divorce cases

[Table D.26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted in 2018](#)

[Table D.27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2018](#)

[Table D.28: Matrimonial applications received in 2018](#)

[Table D.29: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table D.30: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2018](#)

[Table D.31: Average time intervals in weeks for matrimonial applications in 2018](#)

Section 9: Court sitting days and court sitting times

[Table D.32: County court judge and district judge sitting days and court sitting times in 2018 \(hrs :mins\)](#)

Part E: The Magistrates' Court

Key Facts

[Figure E.1: Criminal Adult Magistrates Defendants Received and Disposed from 2009 to 2018](#)

[Summary Table 12: Adult, youth and civil magistrates' courts 2014 to 2018](#)

Magistrates Court – 2018 Data

Section 1: Business volumes received in the magistrates' court

[Table E.1: Business volumes received in adult criminal, youth and civil courts in 2018](#)

Section 2: Adult criminal business disposed of

[Table E.2: Number of adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2018](#)

[Table E.3: Number and type of charges brought for defendants disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table E.4: Outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table E.5: Types of disposals from the magistrates' adult court in 2018](#)

[Table E.6: Average waiting times in weeks for adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2018](#)

Section 3: Youth criminal business disposed of

[Table E.7: Number of defendants disposed of in the youth court in 2018](#)

[Table E.8: Number and type of charges brought for youth defendants disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table E.9: Outcomes for youth defendants disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table E.10: Types of disposals from the youth courts in 2018](#)

[Table E.11: Average waiting times in weeks for youth defendants disposed of in the youth courts in 2018](#)

Section 4: Civil & Family business disposed of

[Table E.12: Number of civil & family applications disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2018](#)

[Table E.13: Average waiting times in weeks in the civil and family magistrates' courts in 2018](#)

[Table E.14: Outcome of applications under the Family Homes & Domestic Violence Order in 2018](#)

Section 5: Court sittings and court sitting times

[Table E.15: Scheduled and additional sittings and average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by venue in 2018 \(hrs : mins\)](#)

[Table E.16: Special sittings and average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by venue in 2018 \(hrs : mins\)](#)

Part F: The Children Order

Key facts

[Summary Table 13: Children Order 2014 to 2018](#)

Children Order – 2018 Data

Section 1: Applications entered and disposed of

[Table F.1: Applications received and disposed of in 2018](#)

[Table F.2: Applications received and disposed of by venue in 2018](#)

Section 2: Reasons for transfer

[Table F.3: Reasons for transfer in 2018](#)

Section 3: Own motion orders and interim orders

[Table F.4: Own motion orders granted in 2018 \(application level\)](#)

[Table F.5: Interim orders granted in 2018 \(application level\)](#)

Section 4: Final Orders Made

[Table F.6: Final Orders Made - 2018 \(application level\)](#)

Section 5: Age and gender of children

[Table F.7: Age and gender of children in applications disposed of in 2018](#)

Section 6: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue

[Table F.8: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue in 2018](#)

Section 7: Court sittings and court sitting times

[Table F.9: Court sittings and court sitting times in 2018 \(hrs : mins\)](#)

Part G: Miscellaneous

Key facts

[Summary Table 14: Enforcement of Judgments Office, Social Security Commissioners, Pension Appeal Tribunals and Coroners 2014 to 2018](#)

Miscellaneous – 2018 Data

Section 1: Enforcement of Judgments Office

[Table G.1: Enforcement orders made and applications for enforcement in 2018](#)

[Table G.2: Money judgments and debt ratio in 2018](#)

[Table G.3 Possession judgments in 2018](#)

Section 2: Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners and Pension Appeals Tribunals

[Table G.4: Social Security Commissioners' applications for leave to appeal to the Commissioners in 2018](#)

[Table G.5: Social Security Commissioners' appeals to the Commissioners in 2018](#)

[Table G.6: Social Security Commissioners' Applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2018](#)

[Table G.7: Pensions Appeal Tribunals entitlement appeals in 2018](#)

[Table G.8: Pensions Appeal Tribunals assessment appeals in 2018](#)

[Table G.9: Pensions Appeal Tribunals specified decision appeals in 2018](#)

[Table G.10: Pensions Appeal Tribunals armed forces compensation scheme appeals in 2018](#)

[Table G.11: Pensions Appeal Tribunals late appeals in 2018](#)

[Table G.12: Pensions Appeal Tribunals jurisdiction appeals in 2018](#)

[Table G.13: Pensions Appeal Tribunals leave to appeal applications in 2018](#)

Section 3: Coroners Service for Northern Ireland

[Table G.14: Coroners' caseload in 2018](#)

Appendix 1: Judge court sitting days

Glossary of terms

Introduction

The Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) is an agency within the Department of Justice for Northern Ireland.

The NICTS carries out the court administrative functions previously undertaken by the Northern Ireland Court Service. The Court Service became part of the Department of Justice upon the devolution of policing and justice and its functions transferred to the Department (by virtue of the Northern Ireland Court Service (Abolition and Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2010 made under section 78 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002).

The principal functions of the NICTS are:

- Providing administrative support for Northern Ireland's courts and tribunals.
- Enforcing civil court judgments through the Enforcement of Judgments Office.
- Providing support for the judiciary.
- Providing advice to the Minister for Justice on matters relating to the operation of the courts and tribunals and the Enforcement of Judgments Office.
- Providing, managing and maintaining court and tribunal buildings.
- Acting as the Central Authority under certain international Conventions.

This publication provides statistical information in relation to the criminal, civil and family business conducted by the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) and the work of some associated offices.

The criminal, civil and family justice systems are impartial and the numbers that are processed through the courts and the corresponding time for processing this information are related to a number of factors. For instance, in relation to criminal cases this may include the seriousness of the offence, the availability of the witnesses and the complexity of individual cases.

For civil cases, this might include external factors such as the state of the economy in relation to mortgage cases received and disposed. The complexity of individual cases and the nature of individual claims may also be factors here.

The Court Structure in Northern Ireland

The Supreme Court

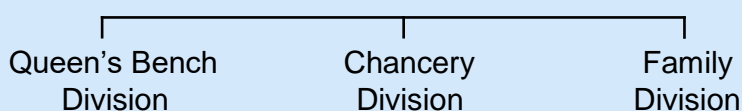
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for the United Kingdom in civil cases.
Final Court of Appeal on points of law for England, Wales and Northern Ireland in criminal cases.

The Court of Appeal

Deals with appeals in civil cases from the High Court and with appeals in criminal cases from the Crown Court. Hears appeals on points of law from the county courts and the magistrates' courts.

The High Court

Hears complex or important civil cases in three divisions and also appeals from county courts.



County Courts

(including family care centres)
Hear a wide range of civil actions and also appeals from magistrates' courts.

Small Claims Courts

Hear consumer claims and minor civil cases.

Coroners' Courts

Investigate the circumstances of sudden, violent or unnatural deaths.

The Enforcement of Judgments Office

Enforces money and other judgments.

The Crown Court

Hears all serious criminal cases.

Magistrates' Courts

(including youth courts and family proceedings courts) (21 petty sessions districts)

Conduct preliminary hearings in more serious criminal cases.

Hear and determine less serious criminal cases, cases involving youths and some civil and domestic cases, including family proceedings.

Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners

Hear appeals from unified Appeal

Tribunals in matters arising from social security, child support, tax credits etc.

Users

Who will be interested in this publication?

The information presented in this publication will be of interest to a wide variety of people. For example the statistics within and those derived from this bulletin are typically used by NICTS policy officials in their role of assisting and advising the Minister for Justice to discharge his duties; by the NI Assembly and Justice committee; by students conducting research into Justice issues; and by the media.

Users of Judicial Statistics

This publication is disseminated directly to approximately 30 users. In addition, it is also published on the NICTS' website and the Department's website and the UK Government Statistics Release Calendar (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>). Users include policy colleagues in NICTS, academics, researchers, members of the public, the NI Assembly, other government departments and other interested parties and individuals.

The publication and further analysis of the data provide an evidence base that is used in a number of NICTS policies, strategies and reviews. Some of the most recent examples are:

- Consultation on review of Scale Costs and Recent Practice and Procedural changes in the County court
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposed-increase-court-fees>
- Consultation on proposals for the rationalisation of the court estate
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposals-rationalisation-court-estate>
- Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service Annual Report and Resource Accounts 2017-2018
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-annual-report-and-accounts-2017-18>

In addition, NICTS data are used within other NI departments and their agencies. Some of the most recent examples are: -

- Department of Justice Digest of information on the NI Criminal Justice system
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/compendia-publications>
- Department for Communities – Northern Ireland Housing Statistics
<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/topics/housing-statistics>

Around 250 statistical enquiries per year are received by the NICTS from various sources. These include requests for further breakdowns by specific offence codes, specific legislation and court outcomes. In addition, approximately 100 Assembly Questions (either written or oral) and Freedom of Information requests relating to statistical data are received by the NICTS each year.

Levels of Reporting

Due to the extensive volume of information contained within this publication it has not been possible to provide comparisons across all case types, County Court Divisions and processing offices. At the beginning of each chapter a summary section detailing five year trend data at the Northern Ireland level has been included, along with key facts. Within the chapters a further breakdown by processing office for the (Crown Court, County Court, Magistrates and Children Order Chapters) has been provided.

On the 31st October 2016, a single County Court division called 'The County Court of Northern Ireland' replaced the seven existing County Court divisions. Relevant data contained in the publication were published by County Court division up until 2016. From 2017 onwards the data has been disaggregated by court office (processing office).

The principle users of this publication are internal business managers and court administrators. Both these users are primarily interested in the regional breakdowns by processing office of court business for the most recent calendar year. This information is used to assess volumes of court business at a regional level to assist in the decisions around staffing levels, prepare business cases for additional sitting days and inform the setting of operational targets.

Each chapter details the figures for 2018 and direct comparisons to 2017 have been outlined within the text. Detailed figures for 2017 can be accessed by following the link to the Judicial Statistics 2017 publication within the summary section of each chapter or by accessing the link below.

Judicial Statistics 2017:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

More information in relation to technical terms throughout the publication can be found within the Glossary section.

Databases

This section will cover how the databases are constructed from the data input stage through to the full validated datasets which are used to produce the figures contained within this publication. This section is split into the following subsections:

1. Data sources
2. Data downloads
3. Data validation
4. Quality assurance
5. Data extract
6. Accessibility
7. Comparability
8. Revisions
9. Other useful information

1. Data sources

This publication uses data which is primarily based on data input onto the Integrated Court Operations System (ICOS). This system was implemented across the NICTS over a two year period from 2005 to 2007.

In 2005, ICOS was introduced in the High Court and county court. As regular downloads of information were available from the new system, more detailed information across all court tiers was included in Judicial Statistics. The High Court and county court sections have been completed based on ICOS since 2005 and caution should be taken when comparing Judicial Statistics from publications prior to this.

During 2006, ICOS was introduced in the Crown Court and criminal magistrates' court. Caution should be taken when comparing figures prior to this.

During 2007, the civil and family module of ICOS was completed. This affected the information in the civil and family magistrates' court section and also in the Children Order section from publications prior to this.

For further advice on the differences between 2018 figures and previous years, please contact the statisticians responsible for this publication.

The ICOS system is a live operating system used in each court tier to process every part of the court business from receipt of payments through to the production of final orders made. The data are input into this system on a daily basis by court clerks, and this information is checked and confirmed by another member of staff to ensure the data entries are correct.

Other data are also used to compile the information presented in Section G: Miscellaneous in this publication. The Enforcement of Judgments Office use a specially designed system to capture all applications to enforce called the Judgment Enforcement Management System (JEMS). The information in this publication has been extracted from this system. Manual spreadsheets on Excel are used to record information that relate to the Coroners Service for Northern Ireland and the Social Security and Child Support Commissioners. These systems are suitable to extract the data for this publication. Like ICOS, the information is recorded on these databases on a daily basis. The

information is validated internally by staff in these offices who check that the system and databases hold the correct information. The statistics and research team within the NICTS check the data that are provided from these systems to ensure that they are robust. However, statisticians in NICTS do recognise that as the information is input manually there is the potential for errors to occur.

2. Data downloads

The statistics and research team receive a download of information on a monthly basis from the ICOS system. The information is downloaded using a web based platform called Sharepoint. This package extracts all the relevant data from ICOS into text files which are refreshed with up to date information each weekend. The text files are downloaded by the Analytical Services Group (ASG) statisticians in NICTS on a monthly basis, using a weekly rotation based on each court tier, as shown below.

Week	Files Downloaded
1	Magistrates' court – civil and family business areas
2	Crown Court and Magistrates' court – criminal business areas
3	High Court – including Queens Bench, Bails, Chancery, Judicial Reviews, Matrimonial and Wardship & Adoption business areas. County Court – all business areas.
4	Magistrates' court – children order business area. Sittings – all court sittings information

The text files are downloaded onto a secure internal facility that only specified statistical personnel have access to. The data contained in the files are identified only by numbers. Names and addresses are not held. These statistical files are not transmitted outside the branch.

ASG import the data into a program called SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Sciences). SPSS is then used to perform extensive data validations to identify potential errors in the data and ensure the data are reliable and robust.

3. Data validation

ASG have invested a lot of time and effort into writing an extensive computer program within SPSS to validate the information downloaded from ICOS. The program includes over 100 checks against each business area.

- (i) checking consistency over time and between variables;
- (ii) reliability of data using logic checks;
- (iii) checking that variables fall within accepted ranges; and
- (iv) checking with the ICOS Support Team in the event of any major discrepancies that have occurred since the last download.

The validation program runs in unison with the download program, for example in week 1 the magistrates' civil and family information is downloaded and the corresponding validation checks

are run on the newly downloaded information. This pattern follows for all the court tiers and business areas.

The validation program is designed to produce user friendly tables highlighting the potential problems with data in the title of the table, and the case numbers of the records affected. A validation report is compiled for each court venue and circulated to the Case Progression Officer for amendment. Each court division has a Case Progression Officer who is responsible for:

- Monitoring accuracy levels on ICOS by carrying out sample checks on data entry and court resulting, ensuring that all validations on ICOS and manual statistical returns are completed in a timely manner. Providing advice and identifying training needs;
- Monitoring the confirmation of ICOS criminal court resulting, including the inputting of adjournment codes;
- Promoting awareness of the impact error can have, its wide ranging consequences and negative impact on the reliability of management information;

The Case Progression Officer is given a two week period from the date the validation report issues until all records are amended on ICOS. This ensures that the corrections are updated before the next download of files by the statistics and research team. After the files have been refreshed each weekend all the data is then downloaded again (in accordance with the schedule) and this new download will reflect the amendments made as a result of the validation reports. If any errors have not been corrected, they will continue to appear in the validation reports until the necessary amendments are made on the ICOS system.

ASG then ensure that all validations in relation to the reporting period are amended prior to publication. Once these amendments have been checked, computer syntax is then used to produce the tables in this publication.

4. Quality assurance

Once computed, the figures in the report are checked carefully prior to publication. The data are broken down by court location as this is the established way of producing and presenting these data. The table below indicates the quality of the data prior to the full years' validation schedule being completed, and then again after the final year figures have been produced. This has been based on the numbers of defendants / cases disposed during the period. As shown, the percentage changes in the figures remain consistently low across all major business areas, typically less than 1%.

Court Tier	Business Area	Disposals (provisional data as published in quarterly bulletins)	Disposals (final year data)	% change
High Court	Chancery	661	653	-1.2%
	Bankruptcy	1318	1271	-3.6%
	Companies	501	500	-0.2%
	Queen's Bench Writs	2375	2298	-3.2%
	Judicial Reviews	339	336	-0.9%
	Probate Grants	6988	6989	<+0.1%
	Divorces	803	804	+0.1%
	Wardship & Adoption	71	70	-1.4%
	Bails	1328	1308	-1.5%
Crown Court	Cases Disposed	1186	1181	-0.4%
	Defendants Disposed	1481	1467	-0.9%
County	Appeals	3298	3298	-
	Civil Bills	9523	9322	-2.1%
	Ejectment	993	988	-0.5%
	Small Claims	9045	8903	-1.6%
	Divorces – Decrees Granted	1427	1427	-
Magistrates	Adult Defendants Disposed	38862	38837	-0.1%
	Youth Defendants Disposed	1444	1443	-0.1%
	Civil / Family Applications Disposed	4042	3999	-1.1%
Children Order	Applications Disposed	4790	4770	-0.4%

5. Data extract

The statistics in this report are taken from the latest available data that are held on the NICTS systems as of 3 June 2019. ASG check all data that are to be published carefully in order to provide a high level of quality assurance in relation to the data. However, NICTS does acknowledge that some errors may occur due to the inputting of incorrect data on to the ICOS. Most of these errors are detected and corrected by the validations that are computed by the statistics and research team before publication. Nonetheless, there is scope for error to occur. There is also scope for error in relation to the report itself. The information here is manually typed and there is the possibility of transcription errors here.

6. Accessibility

In order that the information provided in this publication is accessible to all groups of people, it is available on the NICTS website in a number of formats – pdf, Excel and html. This publication also complies with the NICTS's Internet Accessibility policy. Requests for the information in different formats can be made by contacting the communicationsgroup@courtsni.gov.uk. A charge may apply for formats not routinely used and individuals will be made aware of any charges and asked to confirm their willingness to pay prior commencement of the work.

7. Comparability

The court structure of Northern Ireland does not equate to the court structures of England and Wales, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland, and therefore no comparisons have been made between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK and Ireland.

Direct comparisons can be made for data across all court tiers over an eleven year period, as the ICOS roll out was complete by 2007, except for tables F.4, F.5 and F.6 within the Children Order section.

The recording of orders made within the Children Order courts have been reported at the participant level since 2007, and the introduction of ICOS. Children Order data in relation to orders made, is recorded on ICOS at the **application level**. The data is then extracted based on the **participants** selected on ICOS which indicate all relevant parties to whom the order applies.

Following an operational review of recording practices surrounding the selection of participants to whom orders apply in November 2013, a training program was implemented by operational colleagues. This training was delivered in early 2014 to ensure all relevant participants were being consistently applied on ICOS. This has had a knock-on effect on the numbers of own motion, interim and final orders being reported within the Children Order courts, with figures showing large increases since 2014.

Following a National Statistics consultation with users (for more information click on the following link: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research> a change in the reporting of the orders being made within the Children Order courts from the participant level to the application level from 2016 onwards has been introduced, (and final year figures for 2015 and 2016 have prepared using this new methodology) to overcome issues surrounding the inconsistent recording of participants to whom the orders apply and provide more user friendly data in terms of relating the orders made to the applications being received and disposed. Application level data counts distinct orders made during the court process. This new methodology has been introduced to cover own motion, interim and final orders and will affect the numbers reported in Tables F.4, F.5 and F.6 in this publication.

The numbers of orders made will not be comparable with those published in Judicial Statistics in previous years. To assist with comparisons over time, a back series of orders data from April 2007 to the end of 2015 are available on the Court and Tribunals website at the following link: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

Before September 2009 all the courthouses opened from 9am to 5pm from Monday to Friday each week (excluding public holidays). In September 2009 5 of the 23 courthouses became "Hearing Centres" because they were not fully utilised when the courts weren't sitting and NICTS needed to make better use of their courthouses and staff.

These courthouses were Bangor, Larne, Limavady, Magherafelt and Strabane. They were only open on the day that court hearings take place, and the rest of the time they remain closed.

When the Hearing Centres were opened they offered all of the usual services. However, when the Hearing Centres closed people had to access these services:-

- At other courthouses
- On the telephone
- Over the internet

The NICTS financial situation is different from what it was in 2009. They are now being asked to operate within tighter financial limits but are still required to provide the same range and standard of services.

In March 2013 two of these hearing centres were closed permanently – Larne and Bangor and the court business for these two venues was moved to Ballymena and Newtownards respectively. Caution should therefore be taken when comparing figures with preceding years for Larne and Bangor court houses. For more information on the consultation exercise under taken, please use the link below:

Consultation on proposals to close Hearing Centres

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/consultations/proposals-rationalisation-court-estate>

8. Revisions

Any revisions to data will be applied in light of the NICTS Statistical Notice ‘Policy Statement on Revisions’. Incorrect figures or changes to this publication will be published on the web in a formal Statistical Notice. For further information, please see the following web link:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-statistics-and-research-useful-documents>

9. Other Useful Information

The court structure of Northern Ireland does not equate to the court structures of England and Wales, Scotland or the Republic of Ireland.

Further information on judicial and court statistics for England and Wales can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics?keywords=&topics%5B%5D=all&departments%5B%5D=ministry-of-justice&from_date=&to_date=

Further information on crime and justice statistics in Scotland can be found at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice>

Information on court statistics from the Republic of Ireland can be found at:

<http://www.courts.ie/courts.ie/library3.nsf/PageCurrentWebLookUpTopNav/STATISTICS?opendocument&l=en>

The following web links contain details of information that relates to other criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland:

Department of Justice (Northern Ireland)

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/type/statisticalreports>

Police Service of Northern Ireland

<https://www.psnipolice.uk/inside-psni/Statistics/>

Public Prosecution Service for Northern Ireland

<http://www.ppsni.gov.uk/statistics--research-5021.html>

Youth Justice Agency

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/youth-justice>

Northern Ireland Prison Service

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/prisons/prison-statistics-and-reports>

Probation Board for Northern Ireland

<https://www.pbni.org.uk/about-us/statistics-research/>

Key Highlights

High Court

- Between 2014 and 2018 the number of chancery cases received decreased by 62%. There was a decrease of 15% in the number of chancery cases received between 2017 and 2018. These figures reflect a decrease of 67% in cases received in relation to mortgages between 2014 and 2018, from 2,910 to 946. (Mortgages made up 77% of cases received into the Chancery division in 2018). UKFinance.org. have also reported that the number of mortgages in arrears continues to fall. There have been a number of factors affecting the receipt of Mortgage cases into the Chancery office:
 - *The Judgement of Master Ellison in June 2014 in three test cases, where Banks were double-billing customers for mortgage arrears. At least one third of mortgage institutions then stopped chasing mortgage arrears until a new computer system, which is FSA compliant, was installed to correctly calculate the arrears.*
 - *Barclays bank have been instructed by the FSA to rename the retail lending section of their banking system to 'Barclays Bank UK Ltd' before they can issue any further proceedings.*
 - *A debt company have taken over and purchased a number of short term debts / loans from other companies and there are a number of cases pending on ICOS which may proceed to an increase in Mortgage cases received.*
- Queen's Bench writs received have fluctuated between 2014 and 2018 and by 10% decrease overall. The decrease in the number of writs received between 2013 and 2015 will be partly due to the increase in the financial limit within the County Court during 2013. In 2013 approximately 1,800 ordinary civil bills were received into the County Court for an amount over £15,000 with an equivalent figure of 2,976 in 2014, 2,689 in 2015, 2,390 in 2016, 2,340 in 2017 and 2,457 in 2018, and these cases would previously have been received as Queen's Bench Writs. There was a 53% decrease in the number of Queen's Bench writs disposed of between 2014 and 2018. However, caution should be taken when comparing between years as various manual exercises were carried out to deal with a number of old cases which were withdrawn or settled out of court.

Crown Court

- Figure C.1 outlines the number of Crown Court defendants committed and disposed of during the last 5 years. The trend in the number of defendants committed between 2014 and 2018 has generally decreased, with an overall decrease of 24%. The fall in defendants committed over the last five years indicates that there has been a decrease in the number of defendants committing more serious offences, which as a result must be tried in the Crown Court. As indicated in table E.3, indictable charges in the Magistrates' Court have decreased by 25% between 2014 and 2018 (from 3,074 to 2,295).
- There was a decrease of 32% in the number of defendants disposed between 2014 and 2018. In late 2012 an extra County Court Judge was introduced into Belfast Crown Court division to tackle outstanding legacy cases. As a result the numbers of defendants being disposed overtook the numbers being received each year from 2013. However, in 2015 this trend reversed, with a 36% drop in disposals and 450 more defendants received than disposed. The introduction of new rules in May 2015 in relation to legal aid remuneration resulted in a number of solicitors and counsel withdrawing their representation from a range of court cases. This has affected defendants' access to legal aid representation and has had an impact on disposals and delay within the Crown Court process. In 2016 this trend reversed again as the dispute ended and cases began to progress through the system, and then in 2017 and again in 2018, the disposals decreased, as the majority of the backlog had been cleared.

County Court

- Ordinary civil bill cases received decreased each year between 2014 and 2017, with an overall decrease of 9%, before increasing slightly by 1% in 2018. Caution must be taken when interpreting this data as the financial limit in the County Court increased from £15,000 to £30,000 on 25 February 2013. As a result, claims for amounts over £15,000 and up to £30,000 are now received into the County Court as a civil bill, were they would previously have been entered into the High Court as a Queen's Bench Writ. These claims amounted to approximately 2,976 cases in 2014, approximately 2,689 cases in 2015, approximately 2,390 cases in 2016, approximately 2,340 cases in 2017, and approximately 2,457 cases in 2018. Civil bills disposed fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, with a 2% increase overall.
- Ejectment cases received and disposed fluctuated over the last 5 years. Between 2014 and 2018 both the receipts and disposals declined with decreases of 21% and 24% respectively. The increases and declines in ejectment cases disposed are likely to be due to the changing economic conditions experienced during the period.

Magistrates' Court

- Adult and Youth criminal defendants received have decreased by 5% and 29% respectively between 2014 and 2018 with increases of 1% and decreases of 5% being observed respectively between 2017 and 2018. The decreases since 2013 are partly a result of the introduction of Penalty Notices of Disorder which were introduced on 6th June 2012. These are new diversionary disposals aimed at dealing with minor offences as a direct alternative to a prosecution before the court. The number of defendants received is also affected by crime rates, police arrests and the decision by the PPS to prosecute.
- Average waiting times between a summons/charge and disposal in both the Adult and Youth courts increased by 15% and 20% respectively between 2014 and 2018. Whilst disposals have decreased by 7% and 30% for Adult and Youth defendants disposed, respectively.

The Children Order

- Applications lodged decreased by 9% between 2014 and 2015 before increasing by 2% between 2015 and 2016, and a further 2% between 2016 and 2017. Applications lodged then decreased by 8% in 2018 and by 13% overall between 2014 and 2018.
- Applications disposed generally decreased between 2014 and 2018 apart from a small increase of 1% in 2018, with an overall decrease of 17%.
- The number of children involved also generally decreased between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 15%.

Part A: Court Of Appeal

The Court of Appeal normally sits at the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. The judges of the Court of Appeal are the Lord Chief Justice (who is the President) and three Lord Justices of Appeal. The Court of Appeal hears appeals in criminal matters from the Crown Court and in civil matters from the High Court. It also hears appeals on points of law from the County Courts, Magistrates' Courts and certain Tribunals. A Court of Appeal case will usually be heard by three judges but can be heard by two. Incidental matters may be heard by one Court of Appeal judge.

Key Facts

- Criminal Appeals received have fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, peaking at 107 in 2017. Between 2014 and 2017 there was an 8% increase in Criminal Appeal receipts, followed by a decrease of 5% in 2018.
- Criminal Appeals disposed increased by 27% between 2014 and 2017, before decreasing by 15% between 2017 and 2018.
- Civil Appeals received have fluctuated over the period with an overall increase of 8% between 2014 and 2018. Civil Appeals disposed also fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, and decreased by 19% between 2014 and 2018.
- Civil Appeal Court sitting days have fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, peaking in 2016 with 134 sitting days. Between 2016 and 2018 the number of civil appeals sitting days decreased by 17%, from 134 to 111 days. Criminal Appeal Court sitting days have fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 2%. The highest number of Criminal Appeal Court sitting days occurred in 2015 with 91 days.

Summary Table 1: Court of Appeal 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Criminal Appeals Received	99	93	93	107	102
Criminal Appeals Disposed	96	109	91	122	104
Civil Appeals Received	87	99	75	90	94
Civil Appeals Disposed	97	70	92	68	79
Criminal Appeal Court Sitting Days	85	91	80	65	83
Civil Appeal Court Sitting Days	111	102	134	129	111

Section 1: Criminal appeals

There were 102 criminal appeals lodged during 2018, this was a 5% decrease when compared to 2017 when 107 criminal appeals were lodged (Table A.1).

Table A.1: Criminal appeals lodged and disposed of in 2018

	Lodged	Disposed of
	102	104

In 2018, there were 69 appeals lodged against sentence only, 20 were against conviction, 10 were against both conviction and sentence and there were 3 appeals lodged pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) order 2004. This compares with 74 appeals lodged against sentence only, 22 against conviction, 11 against both conviction and sentence, and no appeals lodged pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) order 2004, in 2017. Of the 102 appeals lodged during 2018, 16 resulted from trials dealing with scheduled offences (Table A.2)

Table A.2: Types of criminal appeals lodged in 2018

	Appeal pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004	Appeal against			Total
		Sentence	Conviction	Conviction and sentence	
Scheduled ^[1]	0	8	7	1	16
Non-Scheduled	3	61	13	9	86
Total	3	69	20	10	102

There were 37 successful appeals (where either the conviction was quashed or the sentence was varied) in 2018 with no appeals refused, and 31 appeals abandoned/ withdrawn/ stayed (Table A.3). In comparison, there were 34 successful appeals in 2017, with no appeals refused and 36 appeals abandoned or withdrawn.

Table A.3: Results of criminal appeals by type in 2018

	Appeal pursuant to Article 17 of Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2004	Conviction only or conviction & sentence		Sentence only		Total
		Scheduled	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Non-Scheduled	
Conviction Quashed	0	1	11	0	0	12
Appeal Dismissed – Sentence Affirmed	0	3	10	3	20	36
Sentence Varied	0	0	1	0	24	25
Withdrawn/ Abandoned/ Stayed	0	0	7	0	24	31
Refused	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	4	29	3	68	104

Section 2: Civil appeals

There were 94 civil appeals received in 2018, 4 more than the 2017 total of 90. As in previous years, the main source of civil appeals was the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court with 46 cases received. A total of 79 appeals were disposed of during the year (Table A.4) which compares with the 68 appeals disposed of in 2017.

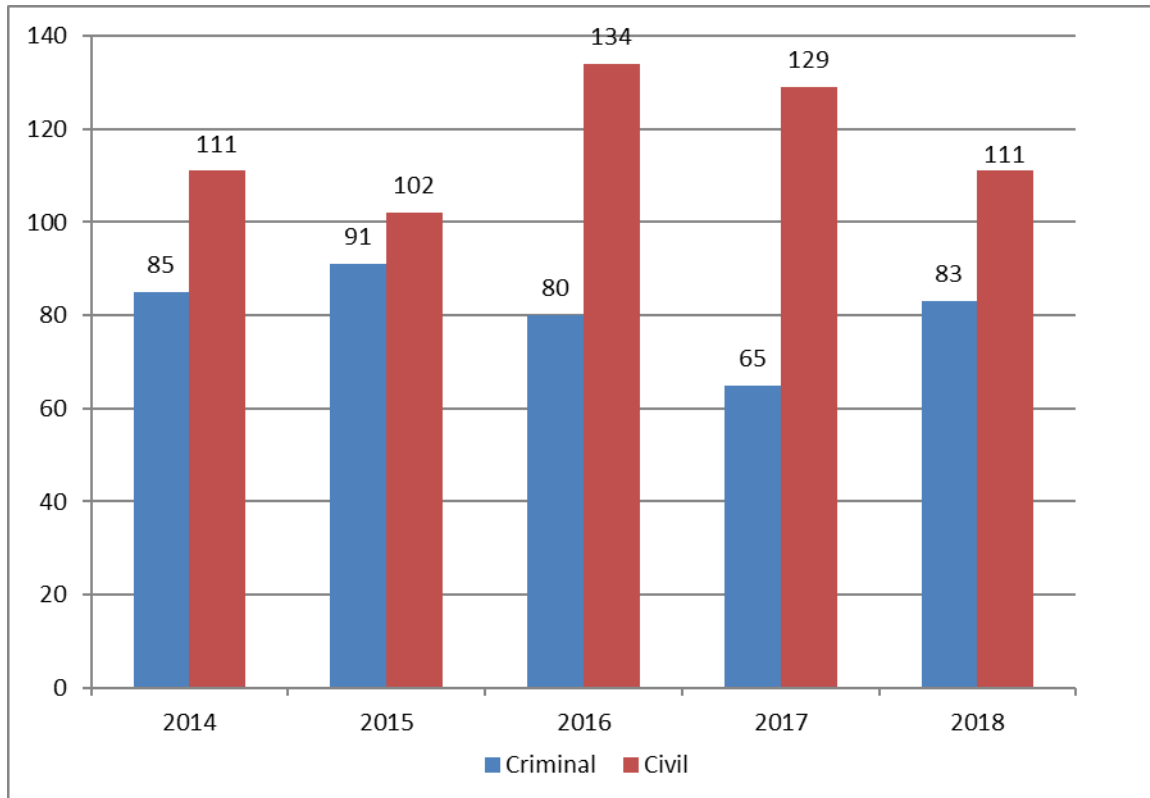
Table A.4: Appeals received and disposed of by origin and type in 2018

	Received	Disposed
Chancery Division: Final	10	10
Chancery Division: Interlocutory	0	0
Family Division: Final	5	3
Family Division: Interlocutory	1	1
Queen's Bench Division:		
Judicial Review: Final	32	24
Judicial Review: Interlocutory	7	3
Commercial: Final	0	3
Commercial: Interlocutory	0	0
Other: Final	6	7
Other: Damages	0	0
Other: Interlocutory	1	0
Magistrates' court (Section 44 of Judicature Act)	1	0
Court of Appeal Cross Appeal	3	0
Case Stated		
Court of Appeal (Appeal or Case Stated)	17	17
Requisition to Judge to State a Case	0	0
By Outside Body	0	0
By Lands Tribunal	0	0
By High Court Judge	7	8
By County Court Judge	3	1
By District Judge	0	0
By District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	1	2
Determination of pensions: Pension appeal	0	0
Immigration Tribunal	0	0
Motions on Notice	0	0
Proceeds of crime	0	0
Master (EJO)	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	94	79

Section 3: Court sitting times

The number of court sitting days spent on criminal appeals (by majority type of work) increased from 65 days in 2017 to 83 days in 2018. A total of 146 hours were spent in court hearing criminal appeals in 2018 compared with 129 court hours in 2017. There were 111 court sitting days (by majority type of work) spent on civil appeals during 2018, compared with 129 in 2017. A total of 181 hours were spent in court hearing civil appeals in 2018 compared with 198 court hours during 2017 (Figure A.1 & Table B.42).

Figure A.1: Number of court sitting days (majority days) in the Court of Appeal from 2014 to 2018



Part B: The High Court

The High Court sits at the Royal Courts of Justice in Belfast. It consists of the Lord Chief Justice (who is the President of the High Court), and three Lords Justices of Appeal along with ten High Court Judges. The High Court hears high value and complex civil cases and deals with civil cases, hears appeals in criminal cases, and also has the power to review the actions of individuals or organisations to make sure they have acted legally and justly. The High Court comprises three Divisions: the Chancery Division, Queen's Bench Division and Family Division.

This section is separated into 4 Sections:

Section 1: Chancery Division

- 1.1 Key Facts
- 1.2 Chancery Division - 2018 Data

Section 2: The Queen's Bench Division

- 2.1 Key Facts
- 2.2 Queens' Bench Division - 2018 Data

Section 3: Family Division

- 3.1 Key Facts
- 3.2 Family Division - 2018 Data

Section 4: Sitting Days

- 4.1 Key Facts
- 4.2 Sitting Days - 2018 Data

Section 1: The Chancery Division

The Chancery Division deals with four main areas of business: Chancery, Bankruptcy, Companies and Probate.

Chancery Office

The main area of business in the Chancery office relates to disputes involving land and property. These include disputes between vendors, purchasers, landlords and tenants; mortgage repossession actions; trespass; right of way; construction of a lease; and squatters. Most actions begin with the issue of a claim or originating proceedings by the claimant against the defendant. The Chancery section also deals with disputes involving copyright; partnerships; patents; execution of trusts; charities; inheritance; and the administration of estates.

People can get into housing debt for a variety of reasons:

- Change in circumstances like job loss, reduction in working hours, sickness or relationship breakdown
- Accessing high cost credit / mortgages from non-traditional lenders and securing it on their homes
- Over borrowing during the property boom

The NICTS produced guidelines for lenders known as Pre-Action Protocols for Mortgage Possession Proceedings. They have been in operation since October 2009 and were revised in August 2011. The Protocols ensure that possession action against homeowners is taken only as a last possible resort <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/information-repossession>

Bankruptcy Office

The Bankruptcy Office deals with all matters relating to insolvency. These include applications to set aside statutory demands; petitions (by creditors and debtors) and voluntary arrangements.

If you cannot repay the debts that you owe, you may be made bankrupt. The most common situations in which you can be made bankrupt are at the request of someone to whom you owe money (a creditors petition) and at your own request (a debtor's petition).

Companies Office

The Companies Office deals with all matters relating to the Companies Order including winding up petitions; insolvent partnerships; and disqualification of directors.

If the Court makes an order to wind up a company it means that the company has gone into compulsory liquidation. The court will then appoint an Official Receiver (OR) to act as liquidator for the company.

Probate Office

The principal business assigned to the Probate Office includes Contentious and Non-contentious Probate applications, leading to the issue of a Grant of Representation in the estate of the deceased person, to facilitate the gathering in and distribution of the assets of the deceased's estate. Probate applications are processed through two registry locations –

- The Principal Registry in Belfast (located in the Royal Courts of Justice)
- The District Registry in Londonderry (located in Londonderry Courthouse)

Since 30 September 2015 the Principal Registry in Belfast manages all probate applications in Northern Ireland, however pending applications lodged prior to this date continue to be managed by the District Registry in Londonderry.

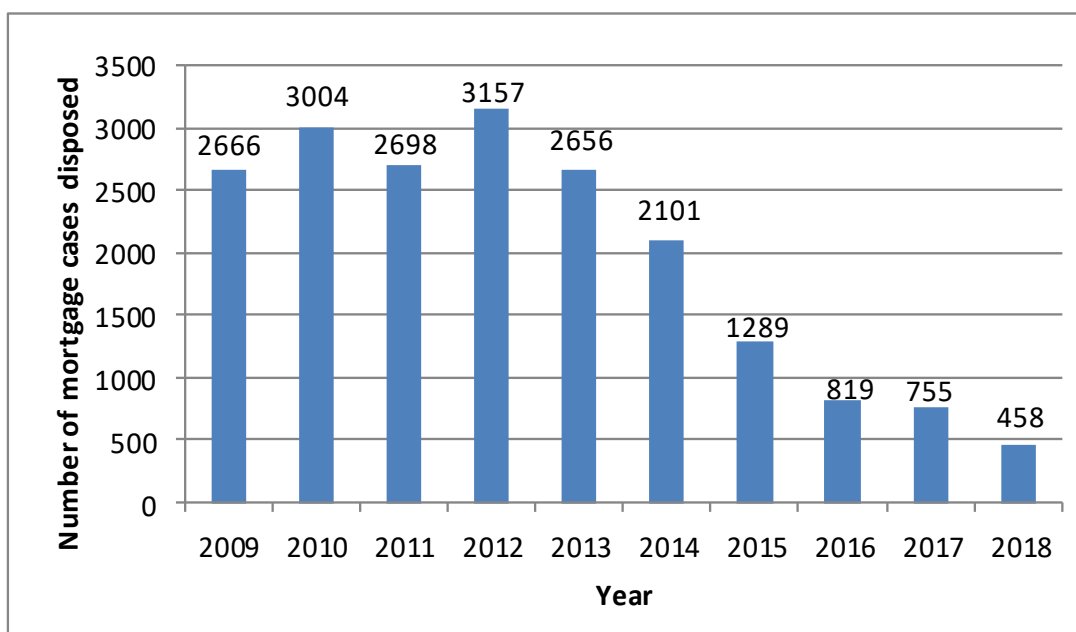
1.1 Key Facts

- Between 2014 and 2018 the number of chancery cases received generally decreased, with a 62% decrease overall. These figures reflect a decrease of 67% in cases received in relation to mortgages from 2,910 in 2014 to 946 in 2018. (Mortgages made up 77% of cases received into the Chancery division in 2018). UK Finance.org has also reported that the number of mortgages in arrears continues to fall.
[https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20\(XLS%20and%20PDF\)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-09-May-2019-final.pdf](https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20(XLS%20and%20PDF)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-09-May-2019-final.pdf)
- The graph below indicates the trend for the last 10 years of Mortgage cases disposed in the High Court. There was a general upward trend from 2009 to 2012, with a dip in 2011. From 2012 to 2018, there was an 85% decrease in mortgage cases disposed. There were decreases each year between 2012 and 2018 as the decline in the wider economic climate lessened.
- The 39% decline in the number of mortgage cases disposed between 2017 and 2018 is in keeping with the declining figures published by UK Finance.org.
[https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20\(XLS%20and%20PDF\)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-09-May-2019-final.pdf](https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Data%20(XLS%20and%20PDF)/UKF-Mortgage-Arrears-Possessions-Update-09-May-2019-final.pdf)

The declines in mortgage cases received and disposed have been affected by a number of factors:

- The Judgement of Master Ellison in June 2014 in three test cases, where Banks were double-billing customers for mortgage arrears. At least one third of mortgage institutions then stopped chasing mortgage arrears until a new computer system, which is FSA compliant, was installed to correctly calculate the arrears.
- Barclays bank have been instructed by the FSA to rename the retail lending section of their banking system to 'Barclays Bank UK Ltd' before they can issue any further proceedings.
- A debt company have taken over and purchased a number of short term debts / loans from other companies and there are a number of cases pending on ICOS which may proceed to an increase in Mortgage cases received.

Figure B.1 Mortgage cases disposed from 2009 - 2018



- There has been a downward trend in the number of bankruptcy cases received between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 49%.
- There has been a similar trend in Bankruptcy cases disposed with disposals decreasing each year between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 38% over the period. Figures published by the Insolvency Service show that individual bankruptcies in Northern Ireland have decreased by 18% between 2017 and 2018. This is consistent with the 15% decrease in Bankruptcy disposals in 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/insolvency-statistics-october-to-december-2018>
- A 2016 amendment to the Insolvency (NI) Order 1989 increased the amount a creditor must be owed by a debtor before the creditor may petition to have the debtor made bankrupt. The increase was from £750 to £5,000. Amendments to the Insolvency (Monetary Limits) Order (NI) have also increased the amount of debt a debtor may owe before applying for a Debt Relief Order (DRO) from £15,000 to £20,000 and also increased the value of the property they may own from £300 to £1,000. This would have reduced the number of applications for bankruptcy coming through the Debt Relief Scheme. There has also been an increase in the number of Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs) between debtors and creditors, where if the debtor owes more than £12,000 and cannot afford to repay the debt, they enter into an agreement without the involvement of the court. A combination of all these factors, will have had an impact on the numbers of in bankruptcies cases proceeding to court.
- The number of companies cases received fluctuated between 2014 and 2018 with an overall decrease of 17%. There was a 23% decrease between 2016 and 2017, followed by a further 7% decrease in 2018. The number of companies cases disposed also fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 11%. The reason for the declines may be linked to the uptake of Company Voluntary Arrangements for which there is no court involvement.
- Probate grants received have increased each year between 2014 and 2018, with an overall increase of 15%.
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2017: <https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 2: Chancery Division cases received 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Chancery	3,189	1,548	1,376	1,439	1,226
Bankruptcy	2,266	1,779	1,755	1,506	1,150
Companies	573	589	659	510	474
Probate grants	6,054	6,550	6,688	6,758	6,989

Summary Table 3: Chancery Division cases disposed 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Chancery	2,307	1,510	1,048	956	653
Bankruptcy	2,043	1,843	1,755	1,498	1,271
Companies	564	568	622	538	500

1.2 Chancery Division - 2018 Data

Table B.1 shows that during 2018, a total of 1,226 Chancery cases were received. This was a decrease of 15% from 1,439 in 2017. Mortgage suits accounted for the majority (77%) of cases received in 2018. The number of mortgages received has decreased by 18% during 2018 (1,155 in 2017 compared with 946 in 2018).

Table B.1: Chancery cases and applications received in 2018

Cases	Mortgages	946
	Other land and property	28
	Trade and business	1
	Trusts	3
	Other	248
	Total	1226
Applications	Notice of appointment	576
	Summons	418
	Notice of motion	64
	Exparte application	127
	Injunction	10
	Other	2
	Transfer to Commercial List	3
	Total	1200

There were 1,204 cases and applications disposed of in 2018 compared with 1,750 in 2017, representing a 31% decrease. Mortgages accounted for the majority of disposals with 458 cases disposed of (Table B.2).

Table B.2: Chancery cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Mortgages	9	445	4	458
	Other land and property	20	13	1	34
	Trade and business	-	1	-	1
	Trusts	1	1	-	2
	Other	74	59	25	158
	Total	104	519	30	653
Applications	Notice of appointment	3	89	-	92
	Summons	51	244	1	296
	Notice of motion	18	18	1	37
	Ex-parte application	8	110	1	119
	Injunction	5	-	-	5
	Transfer to Commercial List	1	-	-	1
	Other	-	1	-	1
	Total	86	462	3	551

Bankruptcy

There were 1,845 bankruptcy cases and applications received in 2018 compared with 2,268 in 2017 – a decrease of 19%. In 2018 these included 982 bankruptcy petitions, 71% of which were creditor petitions (petition by another person). Figures for 2017 revealed that there were 1,295 bankruptcy petitions, of which 74% were creditor petitions. In 2018, other bankruptcy proceedings included 97 originating applications and 599 ordinary applications (Table B.3). Corresponding figures were 142 and 683 respectively in 2017.

Table B.3: Bankruptcy cases and applications received in 2018

Cases	Petition by another person	700
	Petition by debtor	259
	Other petition	23
	Originating application	97
	Other	71
	Total	1150
Applications	Notice of motion	10
	Ordinary application	599
	Certificate of automatic discharge	72
	Other	14
	Total	695

The Master dealt with a total of 1,784 bankruptcy cases and applications in 2018 compared with 2,104 the previous year, a decrease of 15%. The main area of work disposed of by the Master was bankruptcy petitions, a total of 1,012 in 2018 (Table B.4). This was a 17% decrease on the 1,225 bankruptcy petitions disposed of by the Master in 2017.

Table B.4: Bankruptcy cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Petition by another person	2	723	60	785
	Petition by debtor	-	256	7	263
	Other petition	-	33	1	34
	Originating application	1	122	1	124
	Other	-	65	-	65
	Total	3	1199	69	1271
Applications	Notice of motion	-	5	1	6
	Ordinary application	1	516	-	517
	Certificate of automatic discharge	-	48	17	65
	Other	-	16	-	16
	Total	1	585	18	604

Companies

Table B.5 and B.6 show the companies cases and applications received and disposed of in 2018. There were 538 companies cases and applications received and 567 disposed of. This represented an 11% decrease for cases and applications received (607) and a 6% decrease for cases and applications disposed of (604) in 2017.

Table B.5: Companies cases and applications received in 2018

Cases	Winding up petition	295
	Other petitions	17
	Originating summons	18
	Other	144
	Total	474
Applications	Notice of motion	9
	Ordinary application	53
	Other	2
	Total	64

Table B.6: Companies cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Total
Cases	Winding up petition	5	306	-	311
	Other petitions	2	21	-	23
	Originating summons	4	25	-	29
	Other	10	127	-	137
	Total	21	479	-	500
Applications	Notice of motion	3	4	-	7
	Ordinary application	3	55	-	58
	Other	1	1	-	2
	Total	7	60	-	67

Table B.7 shows the average time intervals in weeks for cases and applications in the Chancery Division for the three business areas. A chancery case took on average 66 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal in 2018, ten weeks more than in 2017 (56). It took 19 weeks on average for a bankruptcy case from date of issue to date of disposal in 2018, three weeks more than 2017 (16), and 14 weeks for a companies case (also 14 weeks in 2017).

Table B.7: Average time intervals in weeks for business in the Chancery Division in 2018

	Chancery		Bankruptcy		Companies	
	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications	Cases	Applications
Issue to first listing	50	6	10	4	10	7
First listing to disposal	15	9	9	4	4	20
Issue to disposal	66	15	19	8	14	27

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Due to lenders not being able to submit more recent mortgage cases, mortgages disposed of in 2018 had a higher proportion of older cases than in previous years, with a consequent effect on waiting times.

Probate

The number of grants of probate issued during 2018 increased by 3% from 6,758 in 2017 to 6,989 in 2018 (Table B.8).

Since 30 September 2015, the Principal Registry in Belfast manages all probate applications in Northern Ireland, however pending applications lodged prior to this date continue to be managed by the District Registry in Londonderry.

Table B.8: Probate grants issued in non-contentious proceedings in 2018

	District Registry		Probate		Northern Ireland
	By solicitor	Personal	By solicitor	Personal	
Grant of administration	-	-	1	-	1
Pendente Lite	-	-	-	-	-
Letters of administration with will annexed	-	-	235	3	238
Letters of administration with will annexed (DBN)	-	-	16	-	16
Letters of administration	-	-	1099	204	1303
Grant of probate	-	-	4910	484	5394
Letters of administration (DBN)	-	-	37	-	37
Total grants issued	-	-	6298	691	6989

Section 2: The Queen's Bench Division

The Queen's Bench Division comprises of a number of business areas, namely: the Writ Office, Appeals & Lists Office; Judicial Reviews Office; Commercial Office; and Bail Office. Collectively these Offices are referred to as The Central Office.

The principal business dealt with by the Queen's Bench Division is;

- Claims for damages
- Medical Negligence actions
- Commercial actions
- Matters involving contract
- Personal injury actions
- Appeals from the County Court
- Judicial Reviews
- Bail applications
- Admiralty matters
- Injunctions

Each business area within the Queen's Bench Division has discrete functions, namely;

Writ Office

The primary function of the office is to manage the 'Writ Process' for actions in the Queen's Bench Division, from commencement of proceedings until the trial of the action or final determination. This involves a review process which is initiated approximately 9 months after the last notification by a defendant that they intend to dispute the claim. The aim of the reviews is to progress cases to trial by dealing with matters between the parties which may delay the case being set-down for trial. The Office is also responsible for providing adequately trained staff to act as Court registrars in all Queen's Bench Courts. The Queen's Bench Division deals with large value and/or complex claims for damages including libel and slander actions which may require a jury.

The lower threshold for claims to the High Court increased from £15,000 to £30,000 on 25 February 2013. Cases previously received into the Writ Office for claims between £15,000 and £30,000 are now processed by the County Court. Care should therefore be taken when comparing Writs data before and after this date.

Appeals & Lists Office

The office has overall responsibility for compiling the daily Court List. This involves collating business listed across all the High Court Divisions on a daily basis. The Listing Officer must ensure that business is allocated to appropriate Judges and that adequate courtrooms are available.

Commercial Office

Deals with business relating to a 'business or commercial transaction' such as building contracts, sales of goods, insurance, banking or carriage of goods, may be assigned to the Commercial list, if so directed by the Commercial Judge. One of the ten puisne Judges has been assigned as the Commercial Judge. The Judge carries out regular reviews of actions entered into the Commercial List to ensure that the action is progressed to trial in a timely manner.

Judicial Reviews Office

Judicial Reviews are cases where the court considers if the decision reached by an inferior court, Tribunal, public body or Government Minister followed the proper procedure. The applicant must first apply to the Court for leave to apply for Judicial Review if leave is granted then the applicant has 14 days to apply for a full hearing of the matter.

Bail Office

This office deals with repeat bail applications, i.e. an application to release a defendant from custody who has been refused bail by the Magistrates Court. The Bail Order normally requires the defendant to comply with various conditions and may require money to be lodged or security to be given.

2.1 Key Facts

- Queen's Bench writs received have fluctuated between 2014 and 2018 (10% decrease overall). The decrease in the number of writs received between 2013 and 2015 will be partly due to the increase in the financial limit within the County Court during 2013. In 2013 approximately 1,800 ordinary civil bills were received into the County Court for an amount of £15,000 or over with an equivalent figure of 2,976 in 2014, 2,689 in 2015, 2,390 in 2016, 2,340 in 2017 and 2,457 in 2018, and these cases would previously have been received as Queen's Bench Writs.
- There was a 53% decrease in the number of Queen's Bench writs disposed of between 2014 and 2018. However, caution should be taken when comparing between years as there were various manual exercises carried out during previous years to deal with old cases which were withdrawn or settled out of court.
- There was a 24% decrease in the number of Judicial Review applications received and a 17% decrease in the number disposed of between 2014 and 2018. The number of applications received and disposed decreased by 22% and 7% respectively between 2017 and 2018.
- The number of High Court bail applications received decreased by 11% between 2014 and 2018. There was an 11% increase and a 5% increase respectively, in receipts and disposals between 2017 and 2018.
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2017:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 4: Queen's Bench cases received 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Queen's Bench Division - writs	3,658	3,062	3,068	3,469	3,285
Commercial List set-down ^[R]	46	111	78	94	52
Judicial Reviews (applications)	95	96	101	92	72
Masters' appeals	89	67	86	87	68
High Court bails (applications)	1,818	1,458	1,668	1,449	1,609

^[R] Revised figures. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Summary Table 5: Queen's Bench cases disposed 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Queen's Bench Division – writs	4,858 ^[1]	3,808 ^[1]	3,009 ^[2]	1,970	2,298 ^[2]
Commercial List	168	170	149	121	124
Judicial reviews (applications) ^[R]	106	78	86	95	88
Masters' appeals	81	72	68	83	80
High Court bails (applications)	1,516	1,347	1,387	1,241	1,308

^[1] Please note a manual exercise was carried out during the period to deal with a number of old cases which were withdrawn or settled out of court.

^[2] Please note a manual exercise was carried out during the period to deal with a number of old Personal Injury cases which had a Memorandum of Appearance lodged but no further action had been undertaken.

^[R] Please note that Judicial Reviews disposed for 2018 and 2019 have been revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

2.2 Queen's Bench Division - 2018 Data

There were 5,503 Queen's Bench cases and applications received during 2018, 60% of these were made up of writs and originating summonses. This was 5% less than the figure relating to 2017, when there were 5,781 cases and applications received of which 60% were writs and originating summonses. There has been a 5% decrease in the number of writs received from 3,469 in 2017 to 3,285 in 2018 (Table B.9).

Table B.9: Queen's Bench cases and applications received in 2018

Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	1695
	Breach	119
	Road injuries	660
	Personal injuries	374
	Monies due	219
	Other	218
	Total	3285
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgment	153
	Other	28
	Total	181
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	1254
	Remittals and removals	327
	Exparte applications	223
	Other	233
	Total	2037

Table B.10 shows the breakdown of the amount claimed in writs and originating summonses in 2018. The majority of writs and originating summonses were unliquidated in 2018 – 95%, the same percentage as in 2017.

Table B.10: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses received by amount claimed in 2018

	No Value	Less than £15,000	£15,000-29,999	£30,000-49,999	£50,000 and over	Total
Negligence	1691	-	1	3	-	1695
Breach	117	1	-	-	1	119
Road injuries	660	-	-	-	-	660
Personal injuries	374	-	-	-	-	374
Monies due	70	24	11	45	69	219
Other	218	-	-	-	-	218
Total	3130	25	12	48	70	3285

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount claimed recorded on ICOS.

There were 772 Queen's Bench writs (excluding commercial actions) set-down for trial during 2018 (Table B.11) compared with 782 the previous year, which represented a decrease of 1%.

The change in the financial limit within the county court in 2013 has had an impact upon the Queen's Bench writs received and set-down since 2013. The number of Queen's Bench writs set-down, have decreased by 52% from 1,605 in 2013 to 772 in 2018. Please note that Queens Bench Writs set-

down from 2010 to 2016 were revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

Table B.11: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses set-down by amount claimed in 2018

	No Value	Less than £15,000	£15,000-29,999	£30,000-49,999	£50,000 and over	Total
Negligence	463	1	2	-	-	466
Breach	12	-	2	4	-	18
Road injuries	184	2	1	6	-	193
Personal injuries	65	2	2	2	-	71
Monies due	-	-	-	1	3	4
Other	19	-	1	-	-	20
Total	743	5	8	13	3	772

Excludes commercial actions.

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount claimed recorded on ICOS.

There were 832 writs dealt with in court and 1,372 writs disposed of as office disposals. Actions set-down as negligence constituted 51% of writs disposed of (Table B.12). In 2017, there were 1,065 writs dealt with in court and 782 writs disposed of as office disposals while negligence accounted for 52% of writs disposed.

Table B.12: Queen's Bench cases and applications disposed of in 2018 ^[1]

		High Court Judge	Master	Office Disposal ^[1]	Default judgment	Total
Writs and originating summonses	Negligence	339	38	764	22	1163
	Breach	18	4	36	4	62
	Road injuries	145	20	378	3	546
	Personal injuries	80	80	111	-	271
	Monies due	14	8	49	59	130
	Other	59	27	34	6	126
	Total	655	177	1372	94	2298
Miscellaneous	Foreign judgment	-	-	3	-	3
	Other	6	4	4	-	14
	Total	6	4	7	-	17
Applications	Summons/interlocutory applications	32	1099	-	-	1131
	Remittals and removals	1	310	-	-	311
	Exparte applications	8	170	-	-	178
	Other	119	79	-	-	198
	Total	160	1658	-	-	1818

Excludes commercial actions.

^[1] Please note a manual exercise was carried out during the period to deal with a number of old Personal Injury cases which had a Memorandum of Appearance lodged but no further action had been undertaken.

Of the 926 writs disposed of in 2018, either in court or by way of a default judgment, 41% were for £15,000 or more (Table B.13). The proportion of writs disposed of that were £15,000 and over in 2017 was 39% (468).

Table B.13: Queen's Bench writs and originating summonses disposed by amount in 2018

		No Value	Less than £15,000	£15,000-29,999	£30,000-49,999	£50,000 and over	Total
High Court Judge	Negligence	128	31	68	46	66	339
	Breach	14	-	3	-	1	18
	Road injuries	29	5	25	25	61	145
	Personal injuries	72	1	3	1	3	80
	Monies due	11	1	-	1	1	14
	Other	42	-	3	5	9	59
Master	Negligence	37	-	-	1	-	38
	Breach	4	-	-	-	-	4
	Road injuries	19	-	-	-	1	20
	Personal injuries	80	-	-	-	-	80
	Monies due	8	-	-	-	-	8
	Other	27	-	-	-	-	27
Default judgments	Negligence	22	-	-	-	-	22
	Breach	2	-	-	1	1	4
	Road injuries	3	-	-	-	-	3
	Personal injuries	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Monies due	-	11	3	20	25	59
	Other	2	-	-	1	3	6
Total		500	49	105	101	171	926

Excludes commercial actions and office disposals.

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount awarded recorded on ICOS. No amount awarded can arise when a case has been settled and the value was not notified to the court or the terms of the settlement do not include a monetary value.

In 2018, the average length of time for a writ from first listing to disposal was 25 weeks (Table B.14). In 2017, this was 28 weeks.

Table B.14: Average time intervals in weeks for Queen's Bench cases and applications in 2018

	Writs and originating summonses	Miscellaneous	Applications
Issue to first listing	121	58	4
First listing to disposal	25	12	6
Issue to disposal	146	70	10

Excludes default judgments and office disposals.

Due to rounding and not all writs and originating summonses having a set-down date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Tables B.15, B.16 and B.17 show the number of commercial actions received, set-down and disposed of. During 2018, there were 52 cases set-down compared with 94 in 2017. In 2018, 124 cases were disposed of with 105 of these disposed of by a High Court Judge. Comparable figures in 2017 were 121 and 103 respectively.

Table B.15: Queen's Bench commercial actions received in 2018

Negligence	41
Breach of Contract	18
Personal injuries	-
Monies due	26
Other	13
Total	98

Table B.16: Queen's Bench commercial actions set-down in 2018

Negligence	23
Breach of Contract	13
Personal injuries	-
Monies due	10
Other	6
Total	52

Table B.17: Queen's Bench commercial actions disposed of in 2018

	High Court Judge	Master	Office disposal	Default judgment	Total
Negligence	43	-	9	-	52
Breach of Contract	31	-	5	-	36
Personal injuries	-	-	-	-	-
Monies due	24	2	1	-	27
Other	7	-	2	-	9
Total	105	2	17	-	124

In 2018, the average length of time for a commercial action from first listing to disposal was 44 weeks (Table B.18). In 2017, this was 48 weeks.

Table B.18: Average time intervals in weeks for commercial actions in 2018

	Commercial actions
Received to Entry to commercial list	79
Entry to commercial list to first listing	44
First listing to disposal	44
Received to disposal	167

Excludes default judgments and office disposals.

Due to rounding and not all writs and originating summonses having a set-down date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Judicial Reviews

Tables B.19 to B.21 are in relation to Judicial Reviews. There were 72 applications for Judicial Review in 2018 compared with 92 in 2017. There were 75 applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review granted (32%). The proportion in 2017 for this was 34%. Of the 88 applications for Judicial Review that were disposed in 2018, 20% were granted. In 2017, there were 95 applications for Judicial Review and 34% of these were granted. Please note that 2017 and 2018 data has been revised, more details are available [here](#).

Table B.19: Judicial Review applications received in 2018 ^[R]

Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	287
Applications for Judicial Review	72
Ancillary applications	11

Table B.20: Judicial Review applications disposed of in 2018 ^[R]

	Granted	Withdrawn / Refused / Dismissed	Other	Total
Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	75	156	2	233
Applications for Judicial Review	18	65	5	88
Ancillary applications	1	7	7	15

In 2018, the average length of time from issue to disposal of applications for Judicial Review was 50 weeks (Table B.21) which was a decrease compared to the 51 weeks in 2017.

Table B.21: Average time intervals in weeks for Judicial Review applications in 2018 ^[R]

	Applications for leave to apply for Judicial Review	Applications for Judicial Review	Ancillary applications
Issue to first listing	23	39	46
First listing to disposal	6	11	11
Issue to disposal	29	50	58

Due to rounding and not all applications having a court date, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

^[R] Please note that tables have been revised after a substantial manual exercise at the request of the NI Audit Office. This request focused on disposals that were classified as 'Other', to investigate and reclassify them as 'Granted' or 'Withdrawn/Refused/Dismissed' if appropriate. This has caused a change to the distributions, but not numbers, of receipts and disposals and consequently to the processing times for 2018. Further details may be found in a statistical notice available [here](#).

Masters' appeals

There were 68 Masters' appeals received and 80 Masters' appeals disposed of in 2018 (Tables B.22 and B.23). This compares with the 87 Masters' appeals received and the 83 Masters' appeals disposed of in 2017.

Table B.22: Masters' appeals received in 2018

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	39
Chancery Masters' appeals	29
Total	68

Table B.23: Masters' appeals disposed of in 2018

Queen's Bench Masters' appeals	33
Chancery Masters' appeals	47
Total	80

High Court Bails

There were 1,609 applications for bail received in the High Court during 2018, an increase of 11% from 1,449 in 2017. Of the 1,168 applications disposed in court in 2018, 58% were granted (Table B.26). In 2017, 1,107 applications were disposed in court. Of these, 59% (651) were granted.

Table B.24: Number of bail applications received in 2018

Bail applications	1270
Bail pending appeals to the county court	36
Compassionate bail applications	26
Miscellaneous applications	-
Applications to revoke bail	23
Schedule 2 breaches	-
Time extension	-
Bail variations	254
Total	1609

Table B.25: Number of bail applications disposed of in chambers in 2018

	Granted	Refused	Revoke	Other	Total
Bail applications	3	-	-	1	4
Bail pending appeals to the county court	-	-	-	-	-
Compassionate bail applications	-	-	-	-	-
Application to revoke bail	-	-	-	-	-
Bail variations	124	1	-	11	136
Total	127	1	-	12	140

Table B.26: Number of bail applications disposed of in court in 2018

	Granted	Refused	Revoke	Other	Total
Bail applications	577	384	1	58	1020
Bail pending appeals to the county court	16	9	-	3	28
Compassionate bail applications	13	6	-	-	19
Miscellaneous applications	-	-	-	-	-
Application to revoke bail	-	-	-	-	-
Schedule 2 breaches	-	-	-	-	-
Bail variations	69	24	-	8	101
Total	675	423	1	69	1168

Section 3: Family Division

The Family Division comprises of four key business areas, namely: -

- The Matrimonial Office
- The Office of Care and Protection (Children's Section)
- The Office of Care and Protection (Patient's Section)
- The Official Solicitor's Office

The Matrimonial Office

The Matrimonial Office deals with the following: -

Petitions for divorce - to obtain a decree of divorce the marriage must be proved to have broken down irretrievably with proof of one or more of the following facts:

- adultery
- behaviour with which the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live
- desertion of at least two years
- two years separation where the respondent consents
- five years separation without consent

No petition may be made for divorce within the first year of marriage.

Petitions for nullity - a Decree of Nullity of Marriage is granted where the petitioner proves that the marriage is either void or voidable.

A void marriage is one that is legally invalid because, for example:

- either party was under the age of sixteen at the time of the marriage
- either party was already married
- the parties are prohibited from marrying, for example father and daughter

A voidable marriage is one which is legal but may be nullified by order of the court because, for example:

- it is not consummated due to incapacity or wilful refusal (most nullities are on these grounds)
- where one party was suffering from a venereal disease in a communicable form, or was pregnant by someone else at the time of marriage

Judicial separation - an alternative to divorce is a decree of judicial separation. This does not dissolve the marriage but absolves the parties from the obligation to live together. This procedure might, for instance, be used if religious beliefs forbid or discourage divorce.

Ancillary relief applications - During or after a divorce, the annulment of a marriage (nullity) or judicial separation, there may still be a need for the court to settle disputes over money or property. The court can make a financial order. This is known as ancillary relief and may deal with the sale or transfer of property, maintenance payments (for example weekly or monthly maintenance), a lump sum payment and/or a pension sharing or attachment order.

Dissolution of a Civil Partnership - You can apply to end ('dissolve') your civil partnership if you have been in the partnership for at least a year.

There are 3 main steps to ending a civil partnership:

- File a dissolution petition - you have to apply to court for permission to end your civil partnership, and show reasons why you want to split up.
- Apply for a conditional order - if your civil partner agrees to the petition, you'll get a document saying there's no reason you can't divorce.
- Apply for a final order - this legally ends your civil partnership - you need to wait 6 weeks after you get the conditional order before you can apply.

The Office of Care and Protection (OCP) (Children's Section)

The principal business assigned to this Office is: -

- Guardianship and Wardship of children
- Adoption
- Applications under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Applications under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998

Wardship and Adoption - The principal business assigned to Wardship and Adoption office includes applications in relation to the Guardianship and Wardship of children, Adoption applications and applications under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.

Family Homes and Domestic Violence - The Family Homes and Domestic Violence (NI) Order 1998, is designed to offer civil protection against domestic violence. The 1998 Order provides a single set of remedies which are available in all court tiers. Two main remedies were created: the non-molestation order and the occupation order. Both of these orders can be applied for by way of an ex parte application - that is without the respondent or alleged perpetrator of the violence being present. The number of these type of applications are relatively small in the High Court, and are usually dealt with at this court tier, as they are linked to other proceedings being held in the High Court.

The Office of Care and Protection (OCP) (Patients Section)

Responsibility for the management of the property and affairs of people in Northern Ireland who, through mental disorder, are incapable of managing their own financial affairs is vested in the High Court under the provisions of Part VIII of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. The '**Patient**' is the name given by the Order to a person who is suffering from mental disorder and whose financial affairs are subject to the Court's control. A '**Controller**' is the name given to those appointed by court order to manage a Patient's financial affairs.

The Office of Care and Protection, commonly referred to as OCP is the department of the High Court in which administrative work relating to a Patient's case is dealt with under the supervision of the Master (Care and Protection). The Master is the judicial officer of the Court who is authorised to exercise any discretion, power or other functions of the Court and s/he may also, in particular cases, refer a question to the Judge for decision.

A Controller is a person appointed by the Court to deal with the day-to-day management of the Patient's financial affairs. He or she can be a relative, a friend, or perhaps a professional adviser. If there is no one else suitable or willing to act, an officer of the Court or the Official Solicitor can be appointed in the last resort.

The OCP reviews accounts operated by the Controller (on behalf of the Patient) on an annual basis.

The OCP is also responsible for the registration of Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPA).

The Official Solicitors Office

The Official Solicitor (OS) is an independent statutory officer holder appointed under section 75 of the Judicature (NI) Act 1978 (as amended by section 103 of the Courts Act 2003).

The OS has a wide range of functions primarily necessitating acting as next friend, guardian ad litem or 'Controller' of last resort (for certain minors or adults (known as 'patients') who lack mental capacity to manage their own financial affairs by reason of 'mental disorder' under Part VIII of the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986 ('the 1986 Order'). The OS also represents the interests of minors in a range of legal proceedings at the request of the judiciary.

3.1 Key Facts

- The number of divorce petitions received fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, with an overall increase of 12%. The number of divorce petitions received peaked in 2015 at 2,714 before decreasing by 14% between 2015 and 2017 and then increasing by 10% in 2018. Between 2014 and 2018, the number of divorce petitions granted decreased by 11% overall. Divorce petitions granted peaked in 2014. While all divorce petitions are received in the High Court, divorces are granted in both the High Court and County Court.
- Over the last five years the Orders issued in Mental Health Proceedings have fluctuated, peaking in 2016. Orders issued increased by 56% between 2017 and 2018.

Summary Table 6: High Court Family cases received 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Divorce petitions ^[1]	2,281	2,714	2,418	2,322	2,556
Wardship and adoption	83	89	77	73	79
Family Homes & Domestic Violence	46	46	63	57	30
Mental Health Proceedings (Orders Issued) ^[2]	1,366	1,241	1,519	855	1,331
Official Solicitor's Office – live patient Cases ^[R]	213	165	147	141	130
Official Solicitor's Office – current Minor Cases ^[R]	60	68	88	104	181

^[1] Data include civil partnership petitions.

^[2] 2018 figures have increased compared to 2017, however 2017 figures were lower than usual due to staffing challenges during the period.

^[R] Please note that Minors and Patients caseloads for 2018 were revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Summary Table 7: High Court Family cases disposed 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Divorce petitions granted ^[1]	900	812	884	768	804
Wardship and adoption	63	75	89	58	70
Family Homes & Domestic Violence	48	44	48	46	18
Official Solicitor's Office – Minors' cases Disposed ^[R]	77	48	34	46	47

^[1] Data include civil partnership dissolutions.

^[R] Please note that Minors and Patients caseloads for 2018 were revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Foot Note – Decrees granted – a provisional order for divorce, which may be made 'absolute' provided no reason is provided to the court to say otherwise.

3.2 Family Division – 2018 Data

Matrimonial

The number of divorce petitions received increased by 10%, from 2,322 in 2017 to 2,556 in 2018 (Table B.27). 38% (974) of the divorce petitions received in 2018 were as a result of 2 years separation with consent, compared to 40% in 2017 (931).

Table B.27: Divorce petitions received in 2018

		Filed by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Unknown	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	582	391	1	974
	5 years separation	402	351	-	753
	Adultery	20	10	-	30
	Unreasonable behaviour	353	75	-	428
	Combination of grounds/other	267	103	1	371
Total		1624	930	2	2556

Data include civil partnership petitions.

There were 804 decrees granted in the High Court during 2018, an increase of 5% on the 768 granted during 2017. The most common ground for dissolution continued to be separation (2 years with consent) accounting for 32% of all decrees granted in 2018 (Table B.28), similar to 31% in 2017.

Table B.28: Divorce petitions by type of decrees granted in 2018

		Wife	Husband	Both	Total
Decrees Nisi	2 years with consent	142	116	-	258
	5 years separation	89	59	-	148
	Adultery	10	3	-	13
	Unreasonable behaviour	153	23	1	177
	Combination of grounds/other	110	53	39	202
Nullity	2 years with consent	-	-	-	-
	Combination of grounds/other	3	1	-	4
Judicial Separation	2 years with consent	1	-	-	1
	5 years separation	1	-	-	1
	Adultery	-	-	-	-
	Unreasonable behaviour	-	-	-	-
	Combination of grounds/other	-	-	-	-
Total		509	255	40	804

Data include civil partnership dissolutions.

Table B.29: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2018

		Found by			Total
		Wife	Husband	Both	
Divorce Petitions	2 years with consent	147	109	-	256
	5 years separation	72	70	-	142
	Adultery	8	5	-	13
	Unreasonable behaviour	141	27	1	169
	Combination of grounds/other	115	31	35	181
Total		483	242	36	761

Data include civil partnership dissolutions.

During 2018, there were 1,040 matrimonial applications received, 12% more than the 931 received in 2017. In total, 50% of applications were for ancillary relief in 2018 (Table B.30) compared to the 52% in 2017.

Table B.30: Matrimonial applications received in 2018

Applications	Combination of grounds/other	10
	Ancillary relief	525
	Matrimonial application	481
	Other	24
Total		1040

Of the 839 matrimonial applications disposed of during 2018, 432 (51%) were for ancillary relief (Table B.31). The corresponding number of matrimonial applications disposed of in 2017 was 814 of which 439 (54%) were for ancillary relief.

Table B.31: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2018

		Judge	Master	Total
Applications	Combination of grounds/other	7	1	8
	Ancillary relief	6	426	432
	Matrimonial application	31	361	392
	Other	4	3	7
Total		48	791	839

The average time from the issue of a petition to the date the decree was granted was 39 weeks in 2018 (Table B.32) compared with 41 weeks in 2017.

Table B.32: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2018

	Divorce Petitions
Issue to first listing	38
First listing to date decree granted	1
Issue to date decree granted	39

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

During 2018, the average time from issue to disposal of a matrimonial application was 12 weeks which was less than the average time of 13 weeks in 2017. Applications for ancillary relief took on average 63 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal in 2018 (Table B.33) which was less than the 64 weeks in 2017.

Table B.33: Average time intervals in weeks for matrimonial applications in 2018

	Combination of grounds/other	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial applications	Other
Issue to first listing	1	15	7	1
First listing to disposal	54	48	4	20
Issue to disposal	55	63	12	21

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Wardship and Adoption

During 2018, adoption order applications accounted for 43% (34) of the total applications received (Table B.34) compared with 37% (27) in 2017.

Table B.34: Adoption cases and applications received in 2018

Adoption Order Applications	34
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	11
Children (NI) Order Application	2
Freeing Order Applications	13
Originating Summons (General)	1
Human Fertilisation Originating Summons	1
Interlocutory Applications	4
Wardship Originating Summonses	13
Total	79

Of the cases disposed in 2018, 86% were disposed of by a High Court Judge. The majority of applications disposed of (53%) were adoption order applications (Table B.35). In 2017, 86% of cases were disposed by a High Court Judge with 40% (50) being adoption order applications.

Table B.35: Adoption cases and applications disposed of in 2018

	High Court Judge	Master	Total
Adoption Order Applications	36	1	37
Child Abduction Originating Summonses	6	-	6
Children (NI) Order Application	1	-	1
Freeing Order Applications	12	-	12
Originating Summons (General)	-	-	-
Human Fertilisation Originating Summons	2	-	2
Interlocutory Applications	1	-	1
Wardship Originating Summonses	2	9	11
Total	60	10	70

Ex-parte applications for occupation/non-molestation orders accounted for 43% (13) of the total number of Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications received in 2018 (Table B.36). The number of ex-parte applications was higher in 2017 at 24, and accounted for 42% of cases and applications received.

Table B.36: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications received in 2018

Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	17
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	13
Application to Extend/Discharge/Vary Occupation/Non-Molestation	-
Article 11 Occupation order	-
Total	30

The Master disposed of 61% (11) of the total number of Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2018 compared with 91% (42) in 2017. Table B.37 shows that 50% (9) of all cases in 2018 were ex-parte compared with 48% (22) the previous year.

Table B.37: Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications disposed of in 2018

	High Court Judge	Master	Total
Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	5	3	8
Ex-parte Applications for Occupation/Non-Molestation	1	8	9
Application to Extend/Discharge/Vary Occupation/Non-Molestation	1	-	1
Article 11 Occupation order	-	-	-
Total	7	11	18

Table B.38 shows the average time in weeks for adoption and Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications during 2018. It took on average 27 weeks for an adoption case from date of issue to date of disposal in 2018, the same number of weeks as in 2017.

Table B.38: Average time intervals in weeks for Family Homes and Domestic Violence cases and applications in 2018

	Adoption	Family Homes And Domestic Violence
Issue to first listing	19	4
First listing to disposal	9	23
Issue to disposal	27	27

Due to rounding, individual time intervals may not equal the overall time taken to progress through the courts.

Care and Protection

There were 2,049 patients referred to the Office of Care and Protection in 2018 for investigation under the Mental Health Order, representing an 11% increase on the 2017 total of 1,841 patients. The total live caseload for 2018 was 1,747 (Table B.39) an increase of 6% on the previous year (1,652).

Table B.39: Office of Care and Protection – Mental Health proceedings in 2018

New referrals	2049
Enduring Power of Attorney applications received	1201
Orders issued^[1]	1331
Certificates issued	5749
Reviews completed	1717
Visits^[2]	74
Live Caseload at 31st December^[3]	1747

^[1]2018 figures have increased compared to 2017, however 2017 figures were lower than usual due to staffing challenges during the period.

^[2]The figure for 'visits' represents the number of visits made to patients by the Lord Chief Justice's General Visitors. From June 2015, visits to patients whose affairs are managed by the Official Solicitor were added to the General Visitors annual schedule hence the significant increase.

^[3] Live caseload is the number of active Full Controller Orders at 31 December 2018.

Official Solicitor's Office

Tables B.40 and B.41 demonstrate the caseload of the Official Solicitor's Office. There were 130 live cases relating to patients and 181 current cases relating to minors in 2018. In 2017, there were 141 live cases relating to patients and 104 current cases relating to minors. Please note that Minors and Patients caseloads for 2018 have been revised. For more information about these revisions and to view the amended back series follow the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/ni-courts-and-tribunals-service-statistics>

Table B.40: Official Solicitor's Office – Patient caseload in 2018 ^[R]

		Received ^[1]	Current Caseload ^[2]	Disposed ^[3]
Chancery Court	As Amicus Curiae	-	-	-
	As Controller ad Interim	1	1	-
	As Guardian ad Litem	-	1	-
	As Next Friend	-	2	-
	Total	1	4	-
Declaratory Proceedings	Deprivation of Liberty	13	18	3
	Medical	5	5	5
	Other	-	-	-
	Annual Review DOL	-	-	-
	Total	18	23	8
Judicial Review		1	-	1
Matrimonial	As Guardian ad Litem	6	7	-
	As Next Friend	-	1	-
	Total	6	8	-
Miscellaneous		2	3	-
Non-Molestation Orders	As Guardian ad Litem	1	1	-
	As Next Friend	1	1	-
	Total	2	2	-
Office of Care & Protection	As Amicus Curiae	-	-	-
	As Controller ad Interim	20	22	4
	As Full Controller	1	130	10
	As Guardian ad Litem	2	1	1
	As Next Friend	1	1	-
	Total	24	154	15
Parental Incapacity (over 18)		-	-	-
Queen's Bench	As Guardian ad Litem	2	3	-
	As Next Friend	-	-	-
	Total	2	3	-
Trustee		-	12	-
Certificates Drafted		947		
General Enquiries		17		
Post Received (combined)		5997		

^[1] Received during 2018^[2] Current Caseload – total number of live cases – received in current year and all previous years, which are not yet “disposed” of (closed/deceased/completed)^[3] Disposed – total number of cases closed in 2018, regardless of when they were received. During 2019 a manual review exercise of outstanding cases was conducted, and as a result a number of cases were disposed.^[R] Revised Figures - data for 2018 have been revised.

Table B.41: Official Solicitor's Office – Minors' caseload in 2018 ^[R]

		Received ^[1]	Current Caseload ^[2]	Disposed ^[3]
Adoption		2	1	1
Chancery Court	Administration of Estate	2	5	1
	Other	-	2	-
	Total	2	7	1
Child Abduction (Hague)		2	1	2
Children's Order Article 7 (Parental Responsibility)	As Guardian ad Litem	-	-	-
	As Next Friend	1	1	-
	As Amicus Curiae Nominal Respondent	1	1	-
	Total	2	2	-
Children's Order Article 8 (Contact/Residency)	As Legal Rep/Guardian ad Litem	24	29	9
	As Next Friend	-	-	-
	As Nominal Respondent	-	-	-
	Total	24	29	9
Children's Order Article 13 (Relocation)		3	2	4
Children's Order Other		29	32	7
Compensation Cases	Criminal Injury	-	6	-
	Personal Injury	-	4	-
	Total	-	10	-
Declaration of Parentage		1	-	1
Declaratory Proceedings	Deprivation of Liberty	-	1	-
	Medical	-	1	-
	Other	1	1	-
	Total	1	3	-
Guardian of the Fortune		1	8	-
Judicial Review		5	3	3
Minor Parent	Acting in adoption	1	1	-
	Acting in Children's Order	34	49	15
	Total	35	50	15
Miscellaneous Cases		1	2	-
Non-Molestation Orders	As Guardian ad Litem	5	5	-
	As Next Friend	1	2	-
	Total	6	7	-
Queen's Bench	House Purchase	2	7	-
	Other	1	9	1
	Total	3	16	1
Trustee		-	3	-
Wardship		5	5	3
Total		122	181	47
Total Number of Cases involving Personal Litigants		5		

^[1] Received during 2018.^[2] Current Caseload – total number of live cases – received in current year and all previous years, which are not yet “disposed” of (closed/deceased/completed)^[3] Disposed – total number of cases closed in 2018, regardless of when they were received.

^[R] Data for 2018 have been revised.

Section 4: Sitting Days

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers. In the High Court the Judiciary are made up of the Lord Chief Justice, three Lords Justices of Appeal and ten High Court Judges.

They sit on a variety of business types as shown in Table B.42, and a sitting day is classified on the basis of the business type on which the majority of time was spent.

4.1 Key Facts

- The number of days sat by High Court judges fluctuated between 2014 and 2018 years increasing by 2% overall.
- Overall sitting times have decreased each year over the five year period, decreasing by 7% over the last year, and decreasing by 18% when compared with 2014.

Summary Table 8: High Court Judge Sitting Days 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Court Sitting Days	1,957	1,890	2,045	1,972	2,001
Total Court Sitting Time (hrs:mins)	4320:58	4222:34	3995:23	3810:02	3559:45

4.2 Sitting Days – 2018 Data

Court sitting days and court sitting times

High Court Judges sat on a total of 2,001 court sitting days, an increase of 1% on the 1,972 days sat during 2017. By majority type of work, High Court Judges sat for a total 433 days hearing Queen's Bench business and 160 in the Crown Court in 2018 (Table B.42). In 2017, High Court Judges sat for a total of 496 days hearing Queen's Bench business and 168 in the Crown Court.

Table B.42 High Court Judges court sitting days and court sitting times in 2018 (hrs : mins)

	Court sitting days	Total court sitting time
Crown	160	272:11
Queen's Bench	433	823:28
Judicial Reviews	243	358:08
Children Order	310	656:15
Other Family	59	102:09
Appeals	24	31:55
Chancery	232	476:02
Bails	345	510:15
Callover	1	2:15
Court of Appeal - Civil	111	181:06
Court of Appeal - Criminal	83	146:01
Total	2001	3559:45

Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken.

Total court sitting time is classified on the basis of all court sitting time spent on each business area.

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

Part C: The Crown Court

The Crown Court has exclusive jurisdiction to try offences charged on indictment. Offences tried on indictment are more serious offences. The Lord Chief Justice is President of the Crown Court and the Lords Justices of Appeal, High Court Judges and county court judges all sit in the Crown Court.

Trial on indictment in the Crown Court follows after the accused has been returned for trial at committal proceedings in a magistrates' court. The Public Prosecution Service is responsible for preparing a formal document called an indictment, stating the charges which the accused will face. The matters are then tried before a judge sitting with a jury.

The Crown Court normally sits at seven different venues throughout Northern Ireland and the trial of non-scheduled offences takes place at the sitting of the Crown Court determined by the District Judge who committed the accused. This is usually the Crown Court acting for the county court division in which the offence is alleged to have been committed.

Appeal from the Crown Court is to the Court of Appeal. If a person wishes to appeal against conviction on a question of fact, the permission of either the Crown Court Judge or the Court of Appeal is required. To appeal against sentence he or she needs the leave of the Court of Appeal.

All persons convicted of a scheduled offence tried on indictment can appeal against conviction to the Court of Appeal on any grounds and without leave. This automatic right of appeal is a safeguard built into the system because in these cases there is no jury.

The prosecution has no right to appeal against the acquittal of a defendant who has been tried on indictment. The Attorney-General can refer a point of law to the Court of Appeal for its opinion, but even if the Court of Appeal considers that the trial judge made an error of law resulting in an acquittal, the acquittal still stands. The reference and subsequent ruling is useful in guiding the prosecution of future trials.

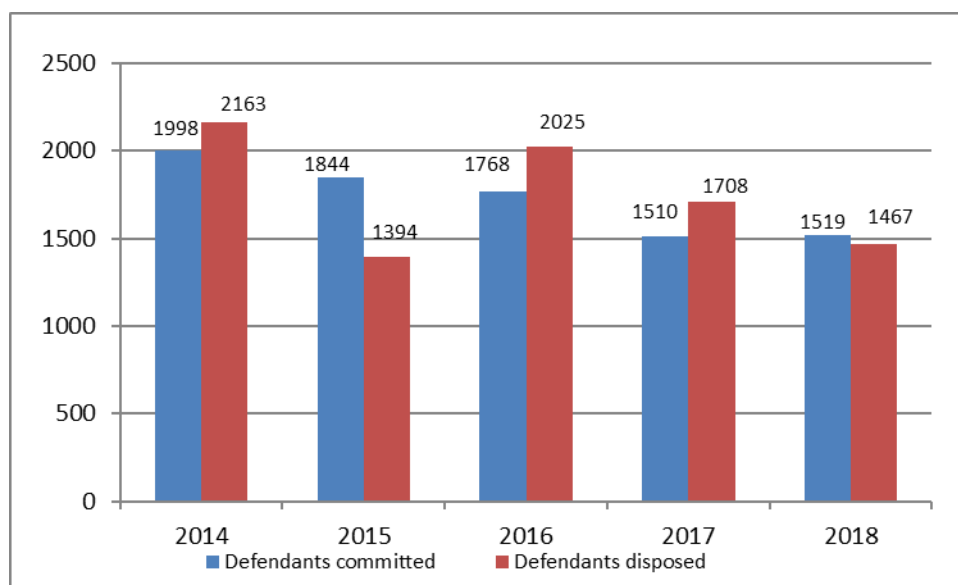
In 2008 the NICTS appointed Case Progression Officers to work with other criminal justice agency officials and the judiciary to minimise delay in the Criminal Courts. Case listing and management are the responsibility of the court; however Case Progression Officers provide support and work with other agency representatives to ensure that all procedural matters are effectively progressed by the parties in the case, therefore reducing unnecessary delay within the system. This includes addressing issues such as:-

- Checking the availability of witnesses
- Managing the arrangements for special measures
- Monitoring disclosure applications
- Ensuring that courtroom technology and interpreter facilities are available
- Monitoring the completion of specialist reports

Key Facts

- Figure C.1 outlines the number of Crown Court defendants committed and disposed of during the last 5 years. The number of defendants committed between 2014 and 2018 has generally decreased, with an overall decrease of 24%. The highest number of committals to the Crown Court occurred in 2014 (1,998). The fall in defendants committed over the last five years indicates that there has been a decrease in the number of defendants committing more serious offences, which as a result must be tried in the Crown Court. As indicated in table E.3, indictable charges in the Magistrates' Court have decreased by 25% between 2014 and 2018 (from 3,074 to 2,295).
- There was a decrease of 36% in the number of defendants disposed of between 2014 and 2015, before increasing by 45% between 2015 and 2016, and then decreasing again by 28% between 2016 and 2018. In late 2012 an extra County Court Judge was introduced into Belfast Crown Court division to tackle outstanding legacy cases. As a result the numbers of defendants being disposed overtook the numbers being received each year from 2013. However in 2015 this trend changed, with a 36% drop in disposals and 450 more defendants received than disposed. **The introduction of new rules in May 2015 in relation to legal aid remuneration resulted in a number of solicitors and counsel withdrawing their representation from a range of court cases. This has affected defendants' access to legal aid representation and has had an impact on disposals and delay within the Crown Court process.** In 2016 the trend reversed again as the dispute ended and cases began to progress through the system again, and then in 2017 and 2018, the disposals decreased again as the majority of the backlog had been cleared.

Figure C.1: Crown Court defendants committed and disposed from 2014 to 2018



- Average waiting times between committal and start of trial increased between 2014 and 2016 by 49%, to 168 days. This was due in part to the cases delayed due to the legal aid dispute in 2015 beginning to progress through the Crown Court in 2016. The average waiting times then decreased by 24% between 2016 and 2018 as the backlog was cleared.
- Crown Court sittings have fluctuated over the last 5 years, with an overall decrease of 7% between 2014 and 2018. (see table C.6).
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2017:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 9: Crown Court 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Cases received	1,551	1,492	1,438	1,214	1,237
Cases disposed	1,688	1,080	1,640	1,408	1,181
Defendants committed	1,998	1,844	1,768	1,510	1,519
Defendants disposed	2,163	1,394	2,025	1,708	1,467
Average time from committal to start of trial	113	114	168	135	128
Average time from conviction to disposal (days)	51	100	55	63	60
Sittings	2,636	2,326	2,539	2,536	2,448

Foot Note – Committed – the procedure by which a person is returned for trial to the Crown Court by the magistrates' court.

Crown Court – 2018 Data

Section 1: Cases received and disposed of

Table C.1 shows the number of cases received in 2018. There were 1,237 cases received in 2018 compared with 1,214 in 2017, an increase of 2%. In 2018, there were 1,181 cases disposed of (Table C.2), a 16% decrease on the 1,408 disposed of in 2017.

Table C.1: Crown Court cases received in 2018

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	174	-	174
Belfast	16	425	-	441
Craigavon	-	141	-	141
Downpatrick	-	106	-	106
Dungannon	-	138	-	138
Londonderry	-	119	-	119
Newry	-	118	-	118
Total	16	1221	-	1237

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Table C.2: Crown Court cases disposed of in 2018

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	168	-	168
Belfast	18	364	-	382
Craigavon	-	147	-	147
Downpatrick	-	100	-	100
Dungannon	-	129	-	129
Londonderry	-	119	-	119
Newry	-	136	-	136
Total	18	1163	-	1181

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Table C.3 Defendants committed to Crown Court in 2018

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	210	-	210
Belfast	33	522	-	555
Craigavon	-	176	-	176
Downpatrick	-	136	-	136
Dungannon	-	158	-	158
Londonderry	-	139	-	139
Newry	-	145	-	145
Total	33	1486	-	1519

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

In 2018, there were 1,519 defendants committed to the Crown Court (Table C.3). This was a 1% increase on the 1,510 committed in 2017. There was a total of 1,467 defendants disposed of during 2018 (Table C.4). This was a decrease of 14% when compared with the 1,708 defendants disposed of in 2017.

Table C.4: Crown Court defendants disposed of in 2018

	Justice & Security Act ^[1]	Non-Scheduled	Scheduled	Total
Antrim	-	201	-	201
Belfast	34	456	-	490
Craigavon	-	188	-	188
Downpatrick	-	119	-	119
Dungannon	-	153	-	153
Londonderry	-	142	-	142
Newry	-	174	-	174
Total	34	1433	-	1467

^[1] Refers to cases to be tried under the Justice and Security (Northern Ireland) Act 2007.

Section 2: Crown Court waiting times

The average waiting time between committal and start of trial was 128 days (Table C.5). This was a decrease of 5% on the 135 days in 2017. The average waiting time between conviction and disposal was 60 days, 5% less than in 2017 (63 days).

Table C.5: Average waiting time in the Crown Court in days in 2018

	Committal to start of trial – days	Conviction to disposal – days	Total defendants disposed of
Antrim	109	67	193
Belfast	121	52	458
Craigavon	109	70	174
Downpatrick	95	85	113
Dungannon	153	50	144
Londonderry	148	59	137
Newry	177	52	172
Total	128	60	1391

Excludes defendants who had a bench warrant or deferred sentence.

Section 3: Defendants disposed of

The majority of defendants were disposed of by a county court judge (98%) (Table C.6). This was less than 2017 when 99% of defendants were disposed of by a county court judge.

Table C.6: Crown Court defendants disposed of by judge type in 2018

	Judicial Level		Total
	County Court Judge	High Court Judge	
Antrim	200	1	201
Belfast	474	16	490
Craigavon	188	-	188
Downpatrick	119	-	119
Dungannon	147	6	153
Londonderry	140	2	142
Newry	174	-	174
Total	1442	25	1467

Table C.7: Crown Court defendants disposed of by charge type in 2018

All Offences Against the Person	173
All Sexual Offences	136
All Burglary Offences	40
All Robbery Offences	12
All Theft Offences	37
All Fraud and Forgery Offences	116
All Criminal Damage Offences	14
All Offences Against the State	16
All Other Offences	68
All Drug Offences	143
All Motoring Offences	48
All Non-Police Offences	-
Combination of Charges	664
Total	1467

In total, 32% of defendants made a plea of guilty on all charges (35% in 2017) and 17% were acquitted on all charges (16% in 2017). (Table C.8).

Table C.8: Outcome of Crown Court defendants in 2018

	Plea of guilty on all charges	Plea of not guilty on at least one charge – found guilty on at least one charge	Plea of not guilty – acquitted on all charges	All charges withdrawn	Total
Antrim	60	112	29	-	201
Belfast	155	249	85	1	490
Craigavon	85	79	24	-	188
Downpatrick	44	70	5	-	119
Dungannon	41	71	40	1	153
Londonderry	51	62	29	-	142
Newry	34	109	31	-	174
Total	470	752	243	2	1467

Section 4: Crown Court sittings and times

There were 2,448 sittings in the Crown Court in 2018. This was a 3% decrease on the number in 2017 (2,536). The total time spent on Crown Court business (5874:14) has decreased by 9% from 2017 (6485:34).

Table C.9: Crown Court sittings and total Crown Court time in 2018 (hrs : mins)

	Number of sittings	Total time
Antrim	274	662:28
Armagh	2	5:08
Belfast	895	2243:29
Coleraine	15	21:56
Craigavon	255	474:57
Downpatrick	147	375:30
Dungannon	278	885:25
Enniskillen	1	0:16
Lisburn	5	2:04
Londonderry	220	451:53
Londonderry@Coleraine	2	3:10
Newtownards	14	30:35
Newry	310	691:01
Omagh	6	11:41
Royal Courts of Justice	24	14:41
Total	2448	5874:14

Crown Court sittings refer to a sitting where any Crown Court business is heard.

Total Crown time includes all time spent on Crown business.

High Court Judges & county court judges sit on Crown business.

Due to rounding individual Crown Court Sitting times may not add up to the total time.

Part D: The County Court

Previously in Northern Ireland, there were seven county court divisions, however on 31st October 2016, a single County Court Division called 'The County Court of Northern Ireland' replaced the seven existing County Court Divisions. As a consequence of this change, data contained in the County Court section is now disaggregated solely by Court Office (Processing Office). There are currently eighteen county court judges and four district judges. Civil cases are commenced in the county court if the value of the case is less than £30,000. The financial limit in the County Court increased from £15,000 to £30,000 on the 25 February 2013. However, for claims concerning matrimonial property or compensation for criminal injuries or criminal damage to property, there is no financial limit. The county court also has jurisdiction to hear applications for adoptions and undefended divorces. Applications for intoxicating liquor licences and certificates of registration for clubs are also made to the county court. In addition to its original civil jurisdiction the county court hears appeals under a number of statutory provisions from the magistrates' courts or from other tribunals.

County courts can deal with a wide range of cases, but the most common ones are:-

- landlord and tenant disputes, for example, possession (eviction), rent arrears, repairs
- consumer disputes, for example, faulty goods or services
- personal injury claims (injuries caused by negligence), for example, traffic accidents, falling into holes in the pavement, accidents at work
- undefended divorce cases, but only in some county courts
- some domestic violence cases, but these may also be heard in the magistrates court
- race and sex discrimination cases
- debt problems, for example, a creditor seeking payment
- employment problems, for example, wages or salary owing or pay in lieu of notice.

The county court also deals with small claims. In general, a small claim is one where the value of the claim is not more than £3,000. This limit was increased from £2,000 in May 2011.

The most common types of claim dealt with in the small claims court are:

- compensation for faulty services provided, for example, by builders, dry cleaners and garages
- compensation for faulty goods, for example, televisions or washing machines which go wrong
- disputes between landlords and tenants, for example, rent arrears or compensation for not doing repairs
- wages owed or money in lieu of notice.

All claims arising from regulated credit agreements must be started in the county court, whatever their value.

The number of cases received and disposed in the county court between 2014 and 2018 is documented in Summary Tables 10 and 11 respectively.

Key Facts

- The number of appeals from the magistrates' courts received and disposed in the County Court decreased by 1% and 10% respectively between 2014 and 2018. Both the receipts and disposals decreased each year between 2013 and 2017, before increasing in 2018.
- Ordinary civil bill cases received decreased each year between 2014 and 2017, before increasing slightly by 1% in 2018. Overall civil bill cases received decreased by 8%. Civil bills disposed fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, peaking at 9,885 disposals in 2017. There was an overall increase of 2% between 2014 and 2018.
- Ejectment cases received and disposed fluctuated over the last 5 years. Between 2014 and 2018, both receipts and disposals increased by 21% and 24% respectively. The increases and declines in ejectment cases disposed are likely to be due to the changing economic conditions experienced during the period.
- Equity cases received remained relatively stable between 2014 and 2018, while equity cases disposed generally decreased between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 10%.
- Despite the limit of the small claims court increasing from £2,000 to £3,000 in May 2011, the number of small claims received decreased on a yearly basis between 2014 and 2018, apart from a spike in 2017. There has been a 12% decrease in receipts overall between 2014 and 2018. There has also been a decreasing trend in the number of small claims disposed between 2014 and 2018, again apart from a spike in 2017. The increases in receipts and disposals are primarily the result of proceedings issued by two debt recovery companies during 2017.
- While all divorce petitions are received in the High Court, divorces can be granted in either the High Court or the County Court. Decrees granted in the County Court fluctuated between 2014 and 2018 with an overall increase of 15% during the period, with peaks in 2015 and 2016. The total number of decrees granted across the High Court and County Court increased between 2014 and 2018 by 4% overall. The number of decrees granted in the County Court was at its highest level in 2016 while in the High Court it was at its highest level in 2014 across the 5 year time series (see Figure D.1).
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2017:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

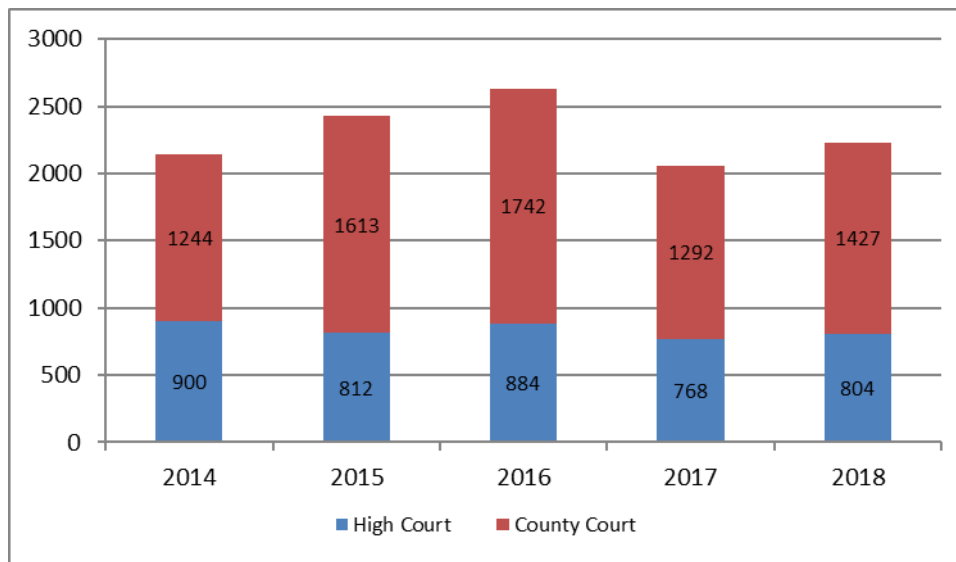
Foot Note – Decrees granted – a provisional order for divorce, which may be made 'absolute' provided no reason is provided to the court to say otherwise.

Summary Table 10: County court cases received 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Appeals from the magistrates' courts	3,738	3,647	3,623	3,444	3,701
Criminal damage cases	36	27	30	30	21
Licences	277	206	204	227	249
Ordinary civil bills	11,675	11,064	10,702	10,600	10,708
Equity	135	130	136	135	131
Ejectment	982	973	989	1,105	1,189
Small claims	11,514	11,002	10,073	11,720	10,180

Summary Table 11: County court cases disposed 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Appeals from the magistrates' courts	3,662	3,532	3,530	3,188	3,298
Criminal damage cases	20	22	20	14	23
Licences	253	185	214	217	231
Ordinary civil bills	9,120	9,193	9,172	9,885	9,322
Equity	112	106	91	104	101
Ejectment	799	834	750	797	988
Small claims	10,112	9,751	8,389	9,462	8,903
Divorce cases (decrees absolute)	1,358	1,479	1,691	1,318	1,322
Divorce cases (decrees granted)	1,244	1,613	1,742	1,292	1,427

Figure D.1: Decrees granted in the High Court and County Court from 2014 to 2018

Foot Note – Decrees granted– a provisional order for divorce, which may be made ‘absolute’ provided no reason is provided to the court to say otherwise.

County Court – 2018 Data

Section 1: Appeals from magistrates' courts

There were a total of 3,701 appeals received during 2018 (Table D.1) and 3,298 appeals disposed of in the county court during 2018 (Table D.2).

Table D.1: Appeals received in 2018

	Appeals received
Antrim	175
Armagh	78
Ballymena	276
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	766
Coleraine	203
Craigavon	308
Downpatrick	54
Dungannon	416
Enniskillen	43
Limavady	61
Lisburn	479
Londonderry	407
Magherafelt	4
Newry	163
Newtownards	134
Omagh	106
Strabane	28
Total	3701

The number of appeals received in 2018 (3,701) increased from 3,444 in 2017 – an increase of 7%. The highest number of appeals received was in Belfast (766) which represented 21% of cases. In 2017, Belfast was also the highest and represented 17% of cases.

Table D.2: Appeals disposed of in 2018

	Appeals disposed
Antrim	121
Armagh	87
Ballymena	236
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	662
Coleraine	220
Craigavon	273
Downpatrick	51
Dungannon	402
Enniskillen	89
Limavady	59
Lisburn	408
Londonderry	302
Magherafelt	3
Newry	149
Newtownards	121
Omagh	97
Strabane	18
Total	3298

The number of appeals disposed of in 2018 (3,298) increased from 3,188 in 2017 – an increase of 3%. The highest number of appeals disposed was in Belfast (662) which represented 20% of cases. In 2017, this office also disposed the highest number of cases (18%).

Tables D.3 to D.5 show the result of appeals against conviction and sentence, appeals against sentence only and civil appeals. The vast majority of appeals (99%) dealt with in court in 2018 were criminal cases, and 1% were civil cases, the same proportion as 2017. Of the criminal appeals, 76% were against sentence only and 24% were against conviction and sentence in 2018. These percentages were 77% and 23% respectively in 2017.

Table D.3: Number of magistrates' court appeals against conviction and sentence in 2018

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	2	6	14	4	26
Armagh	-	15	7	-	22
Ballymena	15	16	35	2	68
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	48	66	70	7	191
Coleraine	7	23	14	-	44
Craigavon	14	31	19	2	66
Downpatrick	5	4	14	2	25
Dungannon	15	26	15	4	60
Enniskillen	8	7	3	-	18
Limavady	1	-	2	-	3
Lisburn	11	51	32	2	96
Londonderry	3	22	12	1	38
Magherafelt	-	1	1	-	2
Newry	19	16	11	15	61
Newtownards	9	9	12	2	32
Omagh	4	9	9	-	22
Strabane	1	2	5	-	8
Total	162	304	275	41	782

The number of appeals against conviction and sentence increased by 10% from 2017 – 713 compared with 782.

The number of appeals against conviction and sentence in 2018 which resulted in the appeal being allowed and in an Order being varied was 304 – 39% of all appeals against conviction and sentence. This was a lower proportion than the 42% in 2017.

Table D.4: Number of magistrates' court appeals against sentence only in 2018

	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied on Appeal	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Abandoned/ Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	-	37	48	10	95
Armagh	-	23	30	11	64
Ballymena	-	82	83	3	168
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	10	199	221	31	461
Coleraine	-	72	95	9	176
Craigavon	-	111	84	7	202
Downpatrick	3	20	3	-	26
Dungannon	3	203	123	12	341
Enniskillen	-	33	36	-	69
Limavady	5	27	17	7	56
Lisburn	-	149	149	9	307
Londonderry	5	90	136	32	263
Magherafelt	-	1	-	-	1
Newry	-	43	42	-	85
Newtownards	2	38	43	5	88
Omagh	-	36	32	4	72
Strabane	-	8	2	-	10
Total	28	1172	1144	140	2484

The number of appeals against sentence increased by 2% from 2017 – 2,484 compared with 2,440.

The number of appeals against sentence only in 2018 which resulted in the appeal being allowed and in an Order being varied was 1,172 – 47% of all appeals against sentence only. In 2017, the corresponding proportion was 44% (1,062 out of 2,440).

Table D.5: Number of magistrates' court civil appeals in 2018

	Appeal Dismissed – Affirm Order	Appeal Allowed – Order Varied	Appeal Allowed – Order Reversed	Appeal Withdrawn	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-	-
Armagh	1	-	-	-	1
Ballymena	-	-	-	-	-
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	5	4	1	-	10
Coleraine	-	-	-	-	-
Craigavon	3	1	-	1	5
Downpatrick	-	-	-	-	-
Dungannon	-	-	1	-	1
Enniskillen	-	1	1	-	2
Limavady	-	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	3	2	-	-	5
Londonderry	-	-	1	-	1
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-	-
Newry	2	1	-	-	3
Newtownards	-	-	1	-	1
Omagh	2	-	1	-	3
Strabane	-	-	-	-	-
Total	16	9	6	1	32

The number of civil appeals in 2018 (32) decreased by 9% from the number of civil appeals in 2017 (35).

Section 2: Criminal damage cases

There were 21 criminal damage cases received during 2018, compared to 30 received in 2017. Belfast accounted for 48% of all cases received in 2018 (33% in 2017). Table D.7 shows that there were 23 criminal damage cases disposed of in 2018, compared with 14 disposed of in 2017.

Table D.6: Number of criminal damage cases and applications received in 2018

Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	1
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	10
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	1
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	-
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	3
	Newtownards	2
	Omagh	4
Strabane	-	
Total	21	
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	-
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	-
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	-
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	1
	Newtownards	-
	Omagh	-
Strabane	-	
Total	1	

Table D.7: Number of criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Total
Cases	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	-	-	-
	Ballymena	-	-	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	12	1	13
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	-
	Coleraine	-	-	-
	Craigavon	-	-	-
	Downpatrick	-	-	-
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	-	-	-
	Londonderry	3	-	3
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	-	-	-
	Newtownards	-	1	1
	Omagh	6	-	6
	Strabane			
	Total	21	2	23
Applications	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	-	-	-
	Ballymena	-	-	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	-	-	-
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	-
	Coleraine	-	-	-
	Craigavon	-	-	-
	Downpatrick	-	-	-
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	-	-	-
	Londonderry	-	-	-
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	1	-	1
	Newtownards	-	-	-
	Omagh	-	-	-
	Strabane	-	-	-
	Total	1	-	1

The average time from issue to disposal for criminal damage cases was 102 weeks in 2018. The corresponding time interval was 113 weeks in 2017. Caution needs to be exercised in comparing these figures due to the small number of cases.

Table D.8: Time intervals in weeks (average) for criminal damage cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	99
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	-
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	27
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	-
	Newtownards	-
	Omagh	147
	Strabane	-
	Total	102
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	-
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	-
	Craigavon	-
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	-
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	4
	Newtownards	-
	Omagh	-
	Strabane	-
	Total	4

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals, and office disposals.

Section 3: Licences

There were 249 licence applications received in the county court in 2018, 10% more than were received in 2017 (227).

In 2018, 231 licence applications were disposed of, an increase of 6% from the previous year (217). Belfast accounted for 38% of licences received and 40% of licences disposed of in 2018, compared to 38% and 44% respectively in 2017.

Table D.9: Licences received and disposed of in 2018

	Licences received	Licences disposed of
Antrim	-	-
Armagh	-	-
Ballymena	-	-
Banbridge@Newry	-	-
Belfast	95	93
Civil Processing Centre	-	-
Coleraine	43	36
Craigavon	22	21
Downpatrick	-	-
Dungannon	-	-
Enniskillen	-	-
Limavady	-	-
Lisburn	-	-
Londonderry	24	19
Magherafelt	-	-
Newry	17	18
Newtownards	30	25
Omagh	18	19
Strabane	-	-
Total	249	231

Section 4: Ordinary civil bills

There were 10,708 ordinary civil bill cases received in 2018. There were also 4,653 applications received during the same period. In 2017 there were 10,600 cases received and 4,804 applications received. This represents an increase in the number of cases by 1% and a decrease of the number of applications by 3%.

Table D.10: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications received in 2018

Cases	Antrim	67
	Armagh	66
	Ballymena	105
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	3399
	Civil Processing Centre	2996
	Coleraine	630
	Craigavon	421
	Downpatrick	237
	Dungannon	13
	Enniskillen	7
	Limavady	5
	Lisburn	355
	Londonderry	416
	Magherafelt	24
	Newry	589
	Newtownards	658
	Omagh	719
	Strabane	1
Total	10708	
Applications	Antrim	31
	Armagh	30
	Ballymena	34
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	1419
	Civil Processing Centre	1304
	Coleraine	177
	Craigavon	235
	Downpatrick	18
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	159
	Londonderry	259
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	250
	Newtownards	438
	Omagh	299
	Strabane	-
Total	4653	

The number of ordinary civil bill cases where Notices of Intention to Defend were received has decreased from 7,320 in 2017 to 7,216 in 2018, representing a decrease in business of one per cent (Table D.11). The civil bills are assigned to each judge type based on the amount claimed, and the distribution of civil bills changed alongside the increase in the financial limit of the County Court to £30,000, in February 2013. At this point the upper threshold for a district judge case moved from £5,000 to £10,000 and as a result District Judges were assigned 57% of civil bills with an NID lodged in 2018, as opposed to 33% in 2012.

Table D.11: Number of ordinary civil bill cases with Notice of Intention to Defend by judicial level in 2018

	County court judge level	District judge level	Total
Antrim	26	35	61
Armagh	18	40	58
Ballymena	35	53	88
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
Belfast	1632	1512	3144
Civil Processing Centre	73	110	183
Coleraine	200	349	549
Craigavon	146	236	382
Downpatrick	181	47	228
Dungannon	6	7	13
Enniskillen	3	3	6
Limavady	1	4	5
Lisburn	134	173	307
Londonderry	115	259	374
Magherafelt	10	13	23
Newry	218	317	535
Newtownards	80	518	598
Omagh	255	406	661
Strabane	-	1	1
Total	3133	4083	7216

The number of cases disposed of decreased by 6%, from 9,885 cases in 2017 to 9,322 in 2018. Of the ordinary civil bill cases disposed of in 2018, 10% were default judgments. A further 29% were disposed of at district judge level the same percentage as the 29% disposed of at county court judge level (Table D.12). Comparable figures for 2017 were 12%, 25% and 34% respectively.

Table D.12: Number of ordinary civil bill cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		Court result - CCJ	Court result - DJ	Non court disposals	Default judgment	Total
Cases	Antrim	10	12	26	-	48
	Armagh	23	24	14	-	61
	Ballymena	17	16	36	1	70
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	1647	1006	1007	12	3672
	Civil Processing Centre	1	3	167	886	1057
	Coleraine	139	222	304	-	665
	Craigavon	143	138	216	6	503
	Downpatrick	27	16	45	-	88
	Dungannon	3	8	6	-	17
	Enniskillen	-	3	2	-	5
	Limavady	-	-	1	-	1
	Lisburn	100	99	146	2	347
	Londonderry	113	230	142	4	489
	Magherafelt	4	7	7	-	18
	Newry	145	231	232	1	609
	Newtownards	145	375	315	2	837
	Omagh	219	356	248	7	830
	Strabane	4	1	-	-	5
	Total	2740	2747	2914	921	9322
Applications	Antrim	10	2	7	-	19
	Armagh	1	1	5	-	7
	Ballymena	3	1	11	-	15
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	181	55	490	-	726
	Civil Processing Centre	-	-	133	-	133
	Coleraine	21	13	58	-	92
	Craigavon	11	3	68	-	82
	Downpatrick	7	1	4	-	12
	Dungannon	-	-	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	13	3	20	-	36
	Londonderry	16	16	81	-	113
	Magherafelt	-	-	-	-	-
	Newry	43	31	49	-	123
	Newtownards	30	8	79	-	117
	Omagh	8	33	129	-	170
	Strabane	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	344	167	1134	-	1645

CCJ and DJ split based on the judicial level assigned to the final sitting date, i.e. CCJ will include DJ sitting as a DCCJ.

Table D.13 shows the amount awarded for ordinary civil bills during 2018. Over a third of civil bills (39%) were awarded between £3,000-14,999.

Table D.13: Number of ordinary civil bill cases by amount awarded in 2018

		No Value	Less than £3000	£3000-14999	£15000-29999	£30000 and over	Total
Cases	Antrim	7	9	4	2	-	22
	Armagh	11	10	26	-	-	47
	Ballymena	7	8	17	1	-	33
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	1124	557	909	61	2	2653
	Civil Processing Centre	1	-	3	-	-	4
	Coleraine	65	94	186	16	-	361
	Craigavon	44	102	123	12	-	281
	Downpatrick	9	10	23	1	-	43
	Dungannon	2	-	6	3	-	11
	Enniskillen	1	1	1	-	-	3
	Limavady	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	35	64	92	8	-	199
	Londonderry	126	96	104	16	1	343
	Magherafelt	1	2	8	-	-	11
	Newry	81	108	175	12	-	376
	Newtownards	116	154	239	11	-	520
	Omagh	158	148	245	24	-	575
Strabane	1	-	4	-	-	5	
Total		1789	1363	2165	167	3	5487

Excludes cases that were adjourned generally, withdrawn, dismissed, default judgments or had office disposals.

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount awarded recorded on ICOS. No amount awarded can arise when a case has been settled and the value was not notified to the court or the terms of the settlement do not include a monetary value.

On average, it took 58 weeks from date of issue to date of disposal for civil bill cases to progress through the county court in 2018 (Table D.14), the same amount of weeks as in the previous year.

Table D.14: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill cases disposed of in 2018

	Issue to disposal
Cases	
Antrim	68
Armagh	52
Ballymena	45
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	61
Civil Processing Centre	15
Coleraine	50
Craigavon	45
Downpatrick	69
Dungannon	94
Enniskillen	48
Limavady	-
Lisburn	51
Londonderry	59
Magherafelt	28
Newry	45
Newtownards	35
Omagh	79
Strabane	542
Total	58

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals and office disposals.

During 2018 a civil pilot continued in Armagh to target old outstanding cases from across NI in an effort to reduce backlogs and promote disposal of civil business. As a consequence, a number of very old cases were disposed during the period and this has therefore affected the average times. In the majority of these cases the case was struck out as it had been settled but the court was not informed.

The average time interval in weeks for civil bill applications disposed of in 2018 was 15 weeks, two weeks more than the length of time for applications disposed of in 2017, which was 13 weeks.

Table D.15: Average time intervals in weeks for civil bill applications disposed of in 2018

		Issue to disposal
Applications	Antrim	16
	Armagh	20
	Ballymena	14
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	18
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	13
	Craigavon	39
	Downpatrick	12
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	20
	Londonderry	9
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	10
	Newtownards	15
	Omagh	8
Strabane	-	
Total	15	

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals and office disposals.

Section 5: Equity

During 2018, there were 131 equity cases received, a decrease of 3% from 2017 (135 equity cases). There were also 58 equity applications received during 2018, a decrease of 3% from 2017 (60 equity applications).

Table D.16: Equity cases and applications received in 2018

Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	1
	Ballymena	4
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	21
	Civil Processing Centre	11
	Coleraine	15
	Craigavon	8
	Downpatrick	5
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	2
	Londonderry	11
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	18
	Newtownards	6
	Omagh	29
	Strabane	-
	Total	131
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	3
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	5
	Civil Processing Centre	4
	Coleraine	7
	Craigavon	4
	Downpatrick	2
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	1
	Londonderry	2
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	5
	Newtownards	4
	Omagh	21
	Strabane	-
	Total	58

Table D.17 shows that there were 101 equity cases disposed of in 2018 which is 3% less than the 104 cases disposed of in 2017. During 2018 the majority of equity cases were disposed of in court (76%). 77% of cases were disposed of in court during 2017.

Table D.17: Equity cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	1	-	1
	Ballymena	2	2	4
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	9	4	13
	Civil Processing Centre	-	1	1
	Coleraine	13	2	15
	Craigavon	9	2	11
	Downpatrick	1	2	3
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	1	1	2
	Londonderry	6	1	7
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	11	1	12
	Newtownards	6	2	8
	Omagh	18	6	24
	Strabane	-	-	-
	Total	77	24	101
Applications	Antrim	-	-	-
	Armagh	-	-	-
	Ballymena	3	-	3
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	1	3	4
	Civil Processing Centre	-	2	2
	Coleraine	-	2	2
	Craigavon	1	2	3
	Downpatrick	-	-	-
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	-	1	1
	Londonderry	1	1	2
	Magherafelt	-	-	-
	Newry	2	1	3
	Newtownards	1	1	2
	Omagh	13	8	21
	Strabane	-	-	-
	Total	22	21	43

Table D.18 shows the time intervals for equity cases and applications from date of issue to date of disposal for each county court division. On average, for cases disposed of during 2018, it took 70 weeks for an equity case to progress through the county courts. In 2017, the corresponding figure was 68 weeks.

Table D.18: Average time intervals in weeks for equity cases disposed of in 2018

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	-
	Armagh	45
	Ballymena	26
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	54
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	84
	Craigavon	68
	Downpatrick	166
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	108
	Londonderry	77
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	61
	Newtownards	47
	Omagh	77
	Strabane	-
Total	70	
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	15
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	3
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	-
	Craigavon	8
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	-
	Londonderry	9
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	5
	Newtownards	19
	Omagh	15
	Strabane	-
Total	13	

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals, and office disposals.

Section 6: Ejectment

There were 1189 ejectment cases received during 2018 compared with 1105 in 2017 – an increase of 8% (Table D.19).

39% of ejectment cases were received in Belfast in 2018, compared to 36% the previous year.

Table D.19: Ejectment cases received in 2018

Cases	Antrim	3
	Armagh	2
	Ballymena	6
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	469
	Civil Processing Centre	176
	Coleraine	70
	Craigavon	29
	Downpatrick	3
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	93
	Londonderry	90
	Magherafelt	2
	Newry	33
	Newtownards	146
	Omagh	67
Strabane	-	
Total	1189	

In 2018, there were 988 ejectment cases disposed of in the county court compared with 797 the previous year – an increase of 24% (Table D.20). The majority of ejectment cases were disposed of in court – 97% of cases in 2018, similar to 2017 (99%).

Table D.20: Ejectment cases disposed of in 2018

		Court result	Non court disposals	Total
Cases	Antrim	2	-	2
	Armagh	-	1	1
	Ballymena	2	2	4
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-
	Belfast	414	4	418
	Civil Processing Centre	2	-	2
	Coleraine	68	2	70
	Craigavon	51	1	52
	Downpatrick	2	-	2
	Dungannon	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-
	Lisburn	86	4	90
	Londonderry	82	4	86
	Magherafelt	2	-	2
	Newry	28	3	31
	Newtownards	152	3	155
	Omagh	72	1	73
	Strabane	-	-	-
Total	963	25	988	

Table D.21 shows the average time in weeks for ejectment cases to progress through the courts during 2018. On average, it took 22 weeks for a case from date of issue to date of disposal, the same number of weeks as in 2017.

Table D.21: Average time intervals in weeks for ejectment cases disposed of in 2018

	Issue to disposal	
Cases	Antrim	21
	Armagh	-
	Ballymena	11
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	23
	Civil Processing Centre	11
	Coleraine	18
	Craigavon	15
	Downpatrick	13
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	24
	Londonderry	17
	Magherafelt	15
	Newry	23
	Newtownards	21
	Omagh	34
	Strabane	-
	Total	22

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals, and office disposals.

Section 7: Small claims

Table D.22 shows that the number of small claims cases received was 10,180 in 2018, a decrease of 13% from 11,720 in 2017. There were 186 applications received in small claims during 2018 compared with 219 in 2017 – a decrease of 15%.

The increase in small claims received in 2017 primarily relates to proceedings issued by two debt recovery companies, who contacted the Civil Processing Centre to confirm they would be lodging proceedings to recover outstanding debt in Northern Ireland. Approximately 70% of this debt was pursued through the small claims court and the remainder through the civil bills court. However in 2018, receipts from these two debt companies have declined.

Table D.22: Number of small claims cases and applications received in 2018

Cases	Antrim	2
	Armagh	25
	Ballymena	27
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	499
	Civil Processing Centre	8861
	Coleraine	139
	Craigavon	83
	Downpatrick	5
	Dungannon	2
	Enniskillen	7
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	40
	Londonderry	102
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	88
	Newtownards	181
	Omagh	119
	Strabane	-
	Total	10180
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	2
	Ballymena	1
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	76
	Civil Processing Centre	17
	Coleraine	19
	Craigavon	8
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	4
	Londonderry	8
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	15
	Newtownards	22
	Omagh	14
	Strabane	-
	Total	186

In 2018, there were 1,204 small claims cases with a Notice of Dispute received which was a decrease of 4% from the previous year (1,252).

Table D.23: Number of small claims cases with a Notice of Dispute received in 2018

Cases	Antrim	2
	Armagh	25
	Ballymena	23
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	442
	Civil Processing Centre	18
	Coleraine	129
	Craigavon	74
	Downpatrick	3
	Dungannon	2
	Enniskillen	7
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	36
	Londonderry	100
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	75
Newtownards	166	
Omagh	102	
Strabane	-	
Total		1204

In total, 8,903 small claims cases were disposed of in 2018. This was a decrease of 6% on the 9,462 cases disposed of during 2017 (Table D.24).

Table D.24: Number of small claims cases and applications disposed of in 2018

		Court disposal	Non court disposal	Default judgment	Total
Cases	Antrim	2	-	-	2
	Armagh	20	2	-	22
	Ballymena	14	8	-	22
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	305	219	16	540
	Civil Processing Centre	3	1854	5670	7527
	Coleraine	110	46	-	156
	Craigavon	58	31	1	90
	Downpatrick	3	2	-	5
	Dungannon	1	1	-	2
	Enniskillen	5	1	-	6
	Limavady	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	32	6	2	40
	Londonderry	76	20	1	97
	Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
	Newry	69	23	-	92
	Newtownards	125	55	2	182
	Omagh	85	31	4	120
	Strabane	-	-	-	-
	Total	908	2299	5696	8903
Applications	Antrim	-	-	-	-
	Armagh	2	-	-	2
	Ballymena	-	-	-	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
	Belfast	46	8	-	54
	Civil Processing Centre	-	2	-	2
	Coleraine	19	5	-	24
	Craigavon	4	-	-	4
	Downpatrick	-	-	-	-
	Dungannon	-	-	-	-
	Enniskillen	-	-	-	-
	Limavady	-	-	-	-
	Lisburn	4	-	-	4
	Londonderry	6	2	-	8
	Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
	Newry	19	-	-	19
	Newtownards	9	12	-	21
	Omagh	10	-	-	10
	Strabane	-	-	-	-
	Total	119	29	-	148

Table D.25 shows that during 2018, it took on average 23 weeks for a small claims case to progress from date of issue to date of disposal, more than in 2017 (22 weeks).

Table D.25: Average time intervals in weeks for small claims cases disposed of in 2018

		Issue to disposal
Cases	Antrim	17
	Armagh	32
	Ballymena	25
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	21
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	27
	Craigavon	34
	Downpatrick	19
	Dungannon	39
	Enniskillen	45
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	28
	Londonderry	22
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	18
	Newtownards	18
	Omagh	23
	Strabane	-
	Total	23
Applications	Antrim	-
	Armagh	21
	Ballymena	-
	Banbridge@Newry	-
	Belfast	6
	Civil Processing Centre	-
	Coleraine	9
	Craigavon	17
	Downpatrick	-
	Dungannon	-
	Enniskillen	-
	Limavady	-
	Lisburn	13
	Londonderry	8
	Magherafelt	-
	Newry	8
	Newtownards	6
Omagh	13	
Strabane	-	
Total	8	

Excludes default judgments, non-court disposals and office disposals.

Section 8: Divorce cases

There were 1,427 decrees granted in undefended divorce cases in the county court in 2018 (Table D.26). The number of decrees granted has increased by 10% from 1,292 in 2017.

Table D.26: Divorce petitions by number of decrees granted in 2018

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/ other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armagh	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ballymena	-	-	-	-	-	-
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	173	149	3	26	22	373
Coleraine	107	102	1	34	18	262
Craigavon	91	74	2	26	12	205
Downpatrick	67	46	1	13	13	140
Dungannon	-	-	-	-	-	-
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	-	-	-	-	-	-
Londonderry	68	64	-	18	13	163
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newry	52	64	-	15	7	138
Newtownards	1	1	-	1	-	3
Omagh	54	57	-	16	16	143
Strabane	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	613	557	7	149	101	1427

Table D.27: Divorce petitions by number of decrees absolute issued in 2018

	2 years with consent	5 years separation	Adultery	Unreasonable behaviour	Combination of grounds/ other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armagh	4	6	-	4	2	16
Ballymena	1	-	-	-	1	2
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	190	136	2	24	20	372
Coleraine	108	95	4	31	25	263
Craigavon	84	71	2	18	12	187
Downpatrick	59	43	1	8	12	123
Dungannon	5	4	-	2	3	14
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	-	-	-	-	-	-
Londonderry	62	60	-	15	9	146
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newry	28	47	-	7	7	89
Newtownards	2	2	1	-	-	5
Omagh	40	43	-	11	11	105
Strabane	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	583	507	10	120	102	1322

In 2018, there were 1,322 decrees absolute issued compared with 1,318 the previous year – an increase of less than one percent.

Tables D.28 and D.29 show that there were 209 matrimonial applications received and 154 disposed of during 2018. Comparable figures in 2017 were 181 and 160 respectively.

Table D.28: Matrimonial applications received in 2018

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-
Armagh	1	-	-	1
Ballymena	9	-	-	9
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
Belfast	29	3	-	32
Coleraine	37	-	4	41
Craigavon	19	1	2	22
Downpatrick	3	-	1	4
Dungannon	1	-	-	1
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	-	-	-	-
Londonderry	33	1	6	40
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
Newry	24	-	2	26
Newtownards	9	-	-	9
Omagh	23	-	1	24
Strabane	-	-	-	-
Total	188	5	16	209

Table D.29: Matrimonial applications disposed of in 2018

	Ancillary relief	Matrimonial application	Other	Total
Antrim	-	-	-	-
Armagh	4	-	-	4
Ballymena	15	-	-	15
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-
Belfast	14	2	-	16
Coleraine	28	-	3	31
Craigavon	14	-	-	14
Downpatrick	2	-	-	2
Dungannon	5	-	-	5
Enniskillen	-	-	-	-
Limavady	-	-	-	-
Lisburn	1	-	-	1
Londonderry	22	1	4	27
Magherafelt	-	-	-	-
Newry	16	-	1	17
Newtownards	5	-	-	5
Omagh	16	-	1	17
Strabane	-	-	-	-
Total	142	3	9	154

County court divorce petitions took on average 32 weeks from date of issue to the date decree nisi granted in 2018, more than the 31 weeks taken in 2017. Matrimonial applications took on average 31 weeks to progress through the county courts during 2018 compared to 40 weeks in 2017.

Table D.30: Average time intervals in weeks for divorce petitions in 2018

	Issue to date decree nisi granted	Date decree nisi granted to date absolute issued
Antrim	-	-
Armagh	-	-
Ballymena	-	-
Banbridge@Newry	-	-
Belfast	28	10
Coleraine	33	11
Craigavon	32	12
Downpatrick	28	10
Dungannon	-	-
Enniskillen	-	-
Limavady	-	-
Lisburn	-	-
Londonderry	44	12
Magherafelt	-	-
Newry	30	13
Newtownards	44	11
Omagh	30	12
Strabane	-	-
Total	32	11

Table D.31: Average time intervals in weeks for matrimonial applications in 2018

	Issue to disposal
Antrim	-
Armagh	86
Ballymena	32
Banbridge@Newry	-
Belfast	29
Coleraine	38
Craigavon	20
Downpatrick	33
Dungannon	94
Enniskillen	-
Limavady	-
Lisburn	48
Londonderry	31
Magherafelt	-
Newry	21
Newtownards	12
Omagh	15
Strabane	-
Total	31

Section 9: Court sitting days and court sitting times

Table D.32 shows that there were 4,243 court sitting days in 2018. This is a decrease of less than one per cent on the 4,246 court sitting days in 2017.

54% of the county court judges and district judges sitting time was spent on criminal cases, 27% of time was spent on civil cases and 19% of time was spent on family cases in 2018. In 2017, the proportion of time spent on each of these court areas was 56%, 28% and 17% respectively.

Table D.32: County court judge and district judge sitting days and court sitting times in 2018 (hrs : mins)

	Number of court sitting days	Average court sitting time	Total court time	Total court criminal time	Total court civil time	Total family time
Antrim	306	2:32	776:27	718:32	56:28	1:27
Armagh	126	2:16	285:29	15:58	267:21	2:10
Ballymena	34	3:53	131:45	0:00	105:10	26:35
Banbridge@Newry	-	-	-	-	-	-
Belfast	1655	2:58	4911:00	2198:58	1248:01	1464:01
Coleraine	76	3:12	243:02	62:55	130:25	49:42
Craigavon	418	2:12	920:02	535:17	124:03	260:42
Downpatrick	174	2:30	436:26	382:30	43:36	10:20
Dungannon	369	3:20	1229:52	949:20	155:23	125:09
Enniskillen	24	4:01	96:31	3:46	88:40	4:05
Limavady	3	4:30	13:30	0:00	13:25	0:05
Lisburn	49	2:58	145:26	40:55	96:56	7:35
Londonderry	355	2:24	854:28	482:01	189:24	183:03
Londonderry@Coleraine	2	1:35	3:10	3:10	0:00	0:00
Londonderry@Omagh	6	2:00	12:00	0:00	10:30	1:30
Magherafelt	19	2:07	40:05	0:00	31:00	9:05
Newry	387	2:12	850:40	732:31	106:19	11:50
Newtownards	136	2:19	314:11	43:20	265:41	5:10
Omagh	84	3:33	297:47	37:21	181:02	79:24
Royal Courts of Justice	2	0:21	0:41	0:41	0:00	0:00
Strabane	18	2:34	46:03	8:50	30:40	6:33
Total	4243	2:44	11608:35	6216:05	3144:04	2248:26

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

Part E: The Magistrates' Court

There are twenty-one petty sessions' districts in Northern Ireland. A magistrates' court (other than a youth court or family proceedings court) is presided over by a district judge (magistrates' court) sitting alone. The present complement of district judges (magistrates' court) is twenty-one. The magistrates' court hears and determines less serious criminal cases, cases involving youth and some civil and domestic cases including family proceedings.

The vast majority of all criminal offences dealt with in Northern Ireland are tried summarily in a magistrates' court. Over half of these offences are offences against Road Traffic Orders, such as the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995 and the Road Traffic Offenders (NI) Order 1996, sometimes described as the 'penalty points' Order.

Magistrates' courts also deal with offences where the defendant can choose trial by jury but decides to have their case heard in the magistrates' court. If the defendant chooses trial by jury, the case will be passed on to the Crown Court. It is estimated that where the defendant has a choice between summary trial and trial on indictment, approximately three out of four cases are dealt with summarily. This is mainly because this mode of trial is much quicker and the sentencing powers of a District Judge (magistrates' court) are more restricted than those of a Crown Court Judge - the most serious punishment which a District Judge (magistrates' court) can impose is 12 months in prison, unless consecutive terms of imprisonment are imposed for more than one offence, when the limit is extended to 18 months.

The youth court deals with young people who have committed criminal offences, and who are aged between 10 and under 18. The youth court is part of the magistrates' court and cases are generally heard before a panel of three persons, a salaried District Judge (magistrates' court) and two specially-trained fee-paid lay magistrates. Although the youth court can deal with the full range of criminal offences (save for murder), if a young person is charged with a very serious offence, which in the case of an adult is punishable with 14 years' imprisonment or more, the youth court can commit them for trial at the Crown Court.

In addition to hearing criminal proceedings the youth court also hears proceedings relating to the care, protection and control of juveniles.

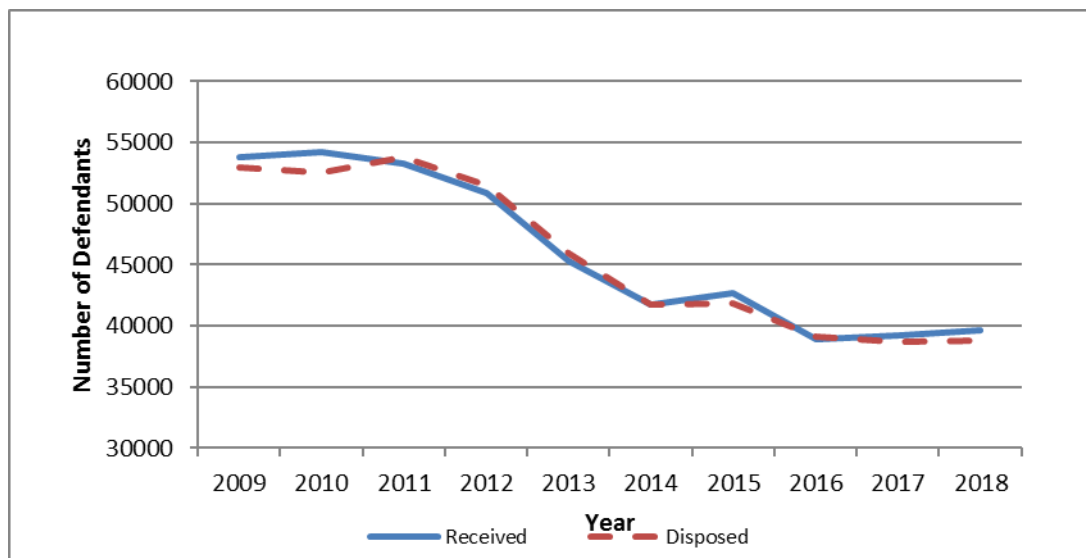
Magistrates' courts can deal with a limited number of civil cases as follows:-

- some civil debts, for example, arrears of income tax, national insurance contributions, VAT arrears, rates
- licences, for example, granting, renewing or taking away licences for pubs and clubs
- some matrimonial problems, for example, maintenance and removing a spouse from the matrimonial home
- welfare of children, for example, local authority care or supervision orders, adoption proceedings and residence orders.

Key Facts

- The number of adult criminal defendants received and disposed have generally decreased over the last 10 years (see Figure E.1).

Figure E.1: Criminal Adult Magistrates Defendants Received and Disposed from 2009 to 2018



- Adult and Youth criminal defendants received have decreased by 5% and 29% respectively between 2014 and 2018. The decreases since 2013 are partly a result of the introduction of Penalty Notices of Disorder which were introduced on 6th June 2012. These are new diversionary disposals aimed at dealing with minor offences as a direct alternative to a prosecution before the court. The number of defendants received is affected by crime rates, Police arrests and the decision by the PPS to prosecute. For more information on Police and PPS figures, please follow the links below:
<https://www.psnj.police.uk/inside-psni/statistics>
<https://www.ppsni.gov.uk/Statistics--Research-5021.html>
- Adult criminal disposals have decreased by 7% and Youth disposals have decreased by 30% between 2014 and 2018 with an increase of less than 1% and a decrease of 6% being observed respectively between 2017 and 2018.
- Average waiting times between a summons/charge and disposal in the Adult court increased by 15% and increased by 20% in Youth court between 2014 and 2018. Between 2017 and 2018, average waiting times increased by 4% in the Adult court and also increased by 4% in the Youth court.
- Civil & Family business received generally decreased annually between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 19% between 2014 and 2018. Disposals have followed the same pattern as the receipts, generally decreasing between 2014 and 2018 with an overall decrease of 21%.

Note: Received – number of defendants received into court by way of Summons or Police charge sheet.
 Disposed – number of defendants who have reached the end of the court process.

- Average waiting times between first hearing and disposal for Civil & Family business have fluctuated over the last five years, with an overall increase of 13% between 2014 and 2018.
- The link below provides comparative figures for 2017:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 12: Adult, youth and civil magistrates' courts 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Adult criminal defendants received	41,764	42,645	38,916	39,202	39,588
Adult criminal defendants disposed	41,709	41,868	39,162	38,649	38,837
Average waiting time between summons/charge and disposal – adults (wks)	10.2	10.5	11.1	11.2	11.7
Youth criminal defendants received	2,035	1,780	1,438	1,518	1,446
Youth criminal defendants disposed	2,050	1,874	1,398	1,532	1,443
Average waiting time between summons/charge and disposal – youths (wks)	13.0	14.3	14.0	15.0	15.6
Civil & Family business received	5,569	4,962	4,797	5,035	4,530
Civil & Family business disposed	5,057	4,478	4,371	4,537	3,999
Average civil and family waiting time between first hearing to disposal (wks)	6.2	6.2	7.0	6.6	7.0

Magistrates Court – 2018 Data

Section 1: Business volumes received in the magistrates' court

In 2018, there were 39,588 adult defendants received, which represents a 1% increase from the 39,202 received in 2017. In the youth court, there were 1,446 defendants received, a 5% decrease from the 1,518 received in 2017 (Table E.1).

Table E.1: Business volumes received in adult criminal, youth and civil courts in 2018

	Number of adult defendants	Number of youth defendants	Number of civil applications
Antrim	1471	36	131
Armagh	994	19	83
Ballymena	2021	74	239
Banbridge@Newry	660	4	45
Belfast	12294	437	1824
Coleraine	1749	63	146
Craigavon	2708	91	167
Downpatrick	1256	27	139
Dungannon	1809	47	89
Enniskillen	1026	27	95
Limavady	595	2	22
Lisburn	1983	106	329
Londonderry	3035	138	288
Magherafelt	658	14	23
Newry	2543	108	300
Newtownards	2914	208	425
Omagh	985	27	104
Strabane	887	18	81
Total	39588	1446	4530

Section 2: Adult criminal business disposed of

There were 38,837 defendants disposed of in 2018 (Table E.2), an increase of less than one per cent from the 38,649 disposed of in 2017. Belfast accounted for 31% of the business, a similar proportion to the 32% in 2017.

Table E.2: Number of adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2018

	Number of adult defendants
Antrim	1438
Armagh	975
Ballymena	1896
Banbridge@Newry	640
Belfast	11924
Coleraine	1733
Craigavon	2646
Downpatrick	1272
Dungannon	1829
Enniskillen	991
Limavady	563
Lisburn	1982
Londonderry	3009
Magherafelt	616
Newry	2517
Newtownards	2917
Omagh	995
Strabane	894
Total	38837

Table E.3 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2018. In total, there were 83,807 charges disposed of, which is an increase of less than one per cent from 83,408 in 2017. PSNI/PPS prosecutions accounted for 87% of charges in 2018 (73,215), a greater percentage than the 86% in 2017 (71,576).

Table E.3: Number and type of charges brought for defendants disposed of in 2018

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Penalty notice for Disorder	Total
Indictable charges	2287	8	-	-	2295
Hybrid charges	24983	1732	-	5	26720
Indictable triable summarily charges	8926	2	-	6	8934
Summary charges	34527	8466	101	7	43101
Other Summary charges	2492	265	-	-	2757
Total	73215	10473	101	18	83807

Figures are based on the number of charges disposed.

The class on ICOS is based on the police classification. Major & minor motoring charges have been counted in either summary, indictable, indictable triable summarily or hybrid.

Table E.4 shows the outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2018. 40% of defendants pleaded guilty on all charges, a 2% increase on the proportion of those making the same plea in 2017 (38%).

Table E.4: Outcomes of defendants disposed of in 2018

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Penalty notice for Disorder	Total
Committed to Crown Court	1456	5	-	-	1461
Plea of guilty on all charges	14437	1186	-	-	15623
All charges withdrawn	4745	2896	2	-	7643
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	99	-	99
Penalty Notice for Disorder Default	-	-	-	18	18
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	7880	4144	-	-	12024
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	1769	200	-	-	1969
Total	30287	8431	101	18	38837

Figures are based on the number of defendants disposed.

Table E.5 shows there were 113,266 final orders granted in the magistrates' adult court in 2018, an increase of 2% from 111,036 in 2017.

Table E.5: Types of disposals from the magistrates' adult court in 2018

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	5133
Custodial Orders	12865
Monetary Orders	31083
Non-Custodial Orders	3869
Road Traffic Orders	19178
Withdrawn	22315
Final Orders	200
Other Final Orders	18623
Total	113266

Figures are based on the number of final orders.

Table E.6 shows the average waiting time in Northern Ireland for adult defendants disposed of in 2018 between the date of summons and the date of first hearing was 6 weeks (5 weeks in 2017). The average waiting time between the date of first hearing and disposal was 6 weeks. This was the same as in 2017.

Table E.6: Average waiting times in weeks for adult defendants disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2018

	Summons/ charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	5.4	4.0	4.7	10.0
Armagh	4.6	5.9	6.7	11.3
Ballymena	5.3	5.0	5.7	11.0
Banbridge@Newry	5.4	6.7	7.2	12.6
Belfast	6.1	5.2	6.0	12.2
Coleraine	4.6	5.4	6.2	10.8
Craigavon	4.7	4.4	5.0	9.7
Downpatrick	4.7	6.3	7.1	11.9
Dungannon	5.1	4.3	5.1	10.2
Enniskillen	4.5	5.2	5.9	10.4
Limavady	4.9	3.4	4.1	9.0
Lisburn	4.6	6.9	8.0	12.7
Londonderry	5.4	5.9	6.9	12.3
Magherafelt	5.5	5.0	5.8	11.3
Newry	8.4	5.1	5.5	13.9
Newtownards	5.0	6.8	7.9	12.9
Omagh	4.8	4.6	5.1	9.9
Strabane	5.1	4.1	4.6	9.7
Total	5.5	5.3	6.1	11.7

Arrest warrants, adjourned generally and deferred sentences are excluded.

Section 3: Youth criminal business disposed of

In 2018, there were 1,443 youth defendants disposed of (Table E.7), with 29% disposed of in Belfast. This represents a 6% decrease from the total disposed of in 2017 (1,532), when 30% were disposed of in Belfast.

Table E.7: Number of defendants disposed of in the youth court in 2018

	Number of youth defendants
Antrim	37
Armagh	21
Ballymena	64
Banbridge@Newry	8
Belfast	414
Coleraine	76
Craigavon	88
Downpatrick	43
Dungannon	41
Enniskillen	24
Limavady	2
Lisburn	99
Londonderry	150
Magherafelt	20
Newry	105
Newtownards	194
Omagh	29
Strabane	28
Total	1443

Table E.8 shows the types of charges disposed of in 2018 for youth defendants. In total, there were 3,355 charges disposed of in 2018. This represents a 10% decrease from 3,712 charges disposed in 2017.

Table E.8: Number and type of charges brought for youth defendants disposed of in 2018

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Indictable charges	61	-	-	61
Hybrid charges	1544	1	-	1545
Indictable triable summarily charges	550	-	-	550
Summary charges	1188	4	1	1193
Other Summary charges	5	1	-	6
Total	3348	6	1	3355

Figures are based on the number of charges disposed.

The class on ICOS is based on the police classification. Major & minor motoring charges have been counted in either summary, indictable, indictable triable summarily or hybrid.

Table E.9 shows the outcomes for youth defendants disposed of in 2018. 46% of youth defendants pleaded guilty on all charges compared with 52% in 2017.

Table E.9: Outcomes for youth defendants disposed of in 2018

	PSNI/PPS Prosecution	Departmental Prosecution	Fixed Penalty	Total
Committed to the Crown Court	12	-	-	12
Plea of guilty on all charges	659	2	-	661
All charges withdrawn	434	2	-	436
Fixed Penalty default	-	-	1	1
Plea not guilty – found guilty on at least one charge	251	1	-	252
Plea not guilty – acquitted on all charges	80	1	-	81
Total	1436	6	1	1443

Figures are based on the number of defendants disposed.

Table E.10 shows there were 4,028 final orders granted in the magistrates' youth court in 2018. This represents an 11% decrease from 4,548 granted in 2017.

Table E.10: Types of disposals from the youth courts in 2018

	Northern Ireland
Community Orders	975
Custodial Orders	404
Monetary Orders	267
Non-Custodial Orders	295
Road Traffic Orders	236
Withdrawn	1218
Final Orders	3
Other Final Orders	630
Total	4028

Figures are based on the number of final orders.

Table E.11 shows the average waiting time in Northern Ireland for youth defendants disposed of in the youth courts in 2018. The average waiting time between the date of summons to the date of first hearing in 2018 was 3 weeks (3 weeks in 2017). The average waiting time between the date of first hearing and finding was 8 weeks (7 weeks in 2017). The average waiting time from date of first hearing to date of disposal was 12 weeks (12 weeks in 2017).

Table E.11: Average waiting times in weeks for youth defendants disposed of in the youth courts in 2018

	Summons/ charge to first hearing (weeks)	First hearing to finding (weeks)	First hearing to disposal (weeks)	Summons to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	3.1	4.5	7.7	10.8
Armagh	4.6	7.7	8.2	12.8
Ballymena	3.1	6.1	11.1	14.1
Banbridge@Newry	11.0	9.2	11.4	22.4
Belfast	3.1	8.3	13.0	16.1
Coleraine	2.5	5.3	8.3	10.7
Craigavon	4.2	8.3	12.4	16.6
Downpatrick	1.7	11.2	17.3	19.0
Dungannon	4.4	6.9	11.4	15.8
Enniskillen	3.2	9.4	11.3	14.5
Limavady	4.6	0.0	1.0	5.6
Lisburn	3.0	8.7	12.6	15.6
Londonderry	3.5	6.8	12.0	15.5
Magherafelt	3.4	5.8	9.6	13.0
Newry	3.7	5.8	8.9	12.6
Newtownards	3.7	8.2	12.6	16.3
Omagh	2.9	14.1	17.1	20.0
Strabane	2.9	27.6	27.8	30.7
Total	3.4	8.2	12.3	15.6

Arrest warrants, adjourned generally, deferred sentences and youth monitored cases are excluded.

Section 4: Civil & Family business disposed of

There were 3,999 applications disposed of during 2018 (Table E.12). This represents a 12% decrease from 4,537 applications disposed of in 2017.

Table E.12: Number of civil & family applications disposed of in the magistrates' court in 2018

	Total
Antrim	111
Armagh	84
Ballymena	190
Banbridge@Newry	47
Belfast	1568
Coleraine	121
Craigavon	152
Downpatrick	124
Dungannon	72
Enniskillen	84
Limavady	22
Lisburn	304
Londonderry	262
Magherafelt	22
Newry	292
Newtownards	399
Omagh	78
Strabane	67
Total	3999

Table E.13 shows the average waiting time in Northern Ireland in the civil and family magistrates' court from the date of issue to first hearing was 2 weeks (also 2 weeks in 2017). The average waiting time from the date of first hearing to disposal was 7 weeks. This was also 7 weeks in 2017. The average waiting time from date of issue to disposal was 9 weeks, compared to 8 weeks in 2017.

Table E.13: Average waiting times in weeks in the civil and family magistrates' courts in 2018

	Date of issue to first hearing (weeks)	Date of first hearing to disposal (weeks)	Date of issue to disposal (weeks)
Antrim	1.3	6.9	8.3
Armagh	1.8	6.1	7.9
Ballymena	1.2	6.7	7.9
Banbridge@Newry	1.6	4.9	6.5
Belfast	1.5	6.5	8.0
Coleraine	1.7	4.7	6.3
Craigavon	1.8	12.7	14.5
Downpatrick	1.9	8.4	10.3
Dungannon	8.7	5.8	14.5
Enniskillen	1.3	4.5	5.9
Limavady	1.7	2.6	4.3
Lisburn	1.0	5.2	6.3
Londonderry	1.9	8.2	10.1
Magherafelt	2.7	10.8	13.4
Newry	2.5	5.1	7.6
Newtownards	1.6	11.1	12.7
Omagh	2.2	5.5	7.7
Strabane	1.2	2.7	3.9
Total	1.7	7.0	8.7

There were 3,798 applications under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence Order disposed of in 2018 (Table E.14), a 13% decrease from the 4,342 disposed of in 2017. The majority of applications were granted (59%) in 2018. This was the same proportion as the previous year (2,545).

Table E.14: Outcome of applications under the Family Homes & Domestic Violence Order in 2018

	Granted	Dismissed or refused	Withdrawn	Vary discharge	Other	Total
Non molestation	2243	508	502	432	36	3721
Occupation	13	9	14	3	1	40
Vary / Discharge non- molestation	3	3	15	11	1	33
Other Family Homes & Domestic Violence	-	1	-	1	2	4
Total	2259	521	531	447	40	3798

Section 5: Court sittings and court sitting times

Tables E.15 and E.16 show the number of scheduled, additional and special court sittings and court sitting times in the magistrates' court in 2018. There were 3,903 scheduled and additional court sittings in the magistrates' court, a decrease of 6% from 4,149 scheduled and additional court sittings in 2017. The average court sitting time was 3 hours 42 minutes, a higher sitting time than in 2017, which was 3 hours 30 minutes. There were 211 special criminal court sittings in 2018, with an average sitting time of 38 minutes, compared to 216 special sittings with an average sitting time of 40 minutes in 2017. There were no special family sittings in 2018, compared to one special family sitting of one hour and 10 minutes in 2017.

Table E.15: Scheduled and additional sittings and average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by venue in 2018 (hrs: mins)

	Adult		Youth		Civil & Family		Total number of sittings	
	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time	Number of sittings	Average sitting time
Antrim	68	5:05	15	3:42	23	3:49	106	4:37
Armagh	88	4:11	5	3:50	-	-	93	4:10
Ballymena	95	4:44	16	4:08	47	3:20	158	4:15
Banbridge@Newry	56	3:24	1	2:15	4	2:44	61	3:20
Belfast	767	3:21	97	2:55	251	3:56	1115	3:27
Coleraine	127	4:11	20	2:34	37	5:29	184	4:16
Craigavon	132	4:48	20	3:52	49	3:33	201	4:24
Downpatrick	98	3:56	5	2:49	2	3:00	105	3:52
Dungannon	138	3:59	15	3:27	39	3:48	192	3:54
Enniskillen	97	4:37	23	3:59	8	3:08	128	4:25
Limavady	52	2:46	-	-	-	-	52	2:46
Lisburn	149	4:11	24	2:26	72	2:54	245	3:38
Londonderry	218	3:54	17	3:08	88	4:15	323	3:57
Londonderry@Coleraine	-	-	3	4:15	14	2:39	17	2:56
Londonderry@Omagh	37	3:35	-	-	-	-	37	3:35
Magherafelt	49	4:06	5	1:48	-	-	54	3:53
Newry	127	3:07	19	2:16	63	4:00	209	3:18
Newtownards	206	3:29	31	2:53	144	3:39	381	3:30
Omagh	88	3:35	17	1:33	35	1:41	140	2:52
Strabane	92	3:22	7	2:00	3	0:50	102	3:12
Total	2684	3:47	340	3:00	879	3:42	3903	3:42

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers. Days are classified based on the earliest scheduled sitting, except when the start time for two or more sittings is the same, in which case the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken.

Table E.16: Special sittings and average sitting times in the magistrates' courts by venue in 2018 (hrs: mins)

	Adult Criminal	
	Number of sittings	Average sitting time
Antrim	-	-
Armagh	-	-
Ballymena	46	0:32
Banbridge@Newry	-	-
Belfast	-	-
Coleraine	-	-
Craigavon	-	-
Downpatrick	1	0:30
Dungannon	-	-
Enniskillen	-	-
Limavady	-	-
Lisburn	41	0:31
Londonderry	30	0:41
Magherafelt	1	1:01
Newry	26	0:27
Newtownards	33	0:34
Omagh	33	1:09
Strabane	-	-
Total	211	0:38

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers. Days are classified based on the earliest scheduled sitting, except when the start time for two or more sittings is the same, in which case the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken.

Part F: The Children Order

The primary aim of the Children Order is to promote the welfare of children. The Order creates a clear, practical and consistent code of law governing the care, protection and upbringing of children and the provision of services to them and their families. It confers concurrent jurisdiction on all three tiers of the courts (High Court, county courts and magistrates' courts) so that subject to certain limited exceptions, any court can make any of the orders available under the Order. Under the Order the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration. When dealing with children, courts try to ensure that delay is avoided, and may only make an order if to do so is better than making no order at all.

All Children Order matters are dealt with at Family Proceedings Courts (which are part of the magistrates' courts), at Family Care Centres (which are part of the county courts) or in the Family Division (Office of Care & Protection) of the High Court. Matters affecting children are split into public and private law applications;

Public Law applications: are those brought by local authorities and include matters such as care, supervision and emergency protection orders.

Private Law applications: are those brought by private individuals, generally in connection with divorce or the parents' separation. Order types include parental responsibility, residence, financial provision and article 8 contact applications.

Key facts

- Applications lodged decreased by 9% between 2014 and 2015 before increasing by 2% between 2015 and 2016, and a further 2% between 2016 and 2017. In 2018, the applications lodged declined by 8%, with an overall decrease of 13% between 2014 and 2018.
- Applications disposed generally decreased between 2014 and 2018, apart from a small increase of 1% in 2018. Between 2014 and 2018 applications disposed decreased by 17%.
- The number of children involved also generally decreased between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 15%.
- **A change in the counting methodology for orders made was introduced in 2016, and therefore a comparison of figures in tables F.4, F.5 and F.6 with previous Judicial Statistics publications prior to 2015 should not be made. A back series of data based on the new counting methodology is available via the following link:**
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>
For more information please see details on page 18 or alternatively contact the statistician responsible for this publication.
- Own motion orders made decreased by 12% from 1,282 in 2017 to 1,122 in 2018. Interim orders increased by 5% from 8,719 in 2017 to 9,198 in 2018, and final orders increased by 3% from 6,814 in 2017 to 6,999 in 2018. The increase in interim orders was mainly due to the increase in interim care orders made.
- The number of court sitting days increased each year between 2014 and 2018. There was an overall increase of 16% between 2014 and 2018.
- The link below provides comparison figures for 2017:
<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-judicial-statistics>

Summary Table 13: Children Order 2014 to 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Applications lodged	5,715	5,223	5,332	5,443	5,000
Applications disposed	5,734	5,140	4,954	4,702	4,770
Children involved ^[1]	8,413	7,686	7,349	6,935	7,174
Number of court sitting days	1,815	1,936	1,953	1,970	2,110

^[1] In 2012, there was a change in measurement of children involved to include children entered as 'respondent child' on ICOS. In 2015 this accounted for 815 children, in 2016 this accounted for 765 children of the total, in 2017 this accounted for 734 children of the total and in 2018 this accounted for 854 children of the total.

Children Order – 2018 Data

Section 1: Applications entered and disposed of

Tables F.1 and F.2, show that a total of 5,000 applications were received in designated courts in 2018. This was a decrease of 8% from 5,443 in 2017. The majority of business (91%) was lodged in family proceedings courts, with 3% lodged in the High Court and 5% lodged in family care centres. In 2017, 92% of business was lodged in family proceedings courts, 3% in the High Court and 5% lodged in family care centres.

Of the 4,770 applications disposed of in 2018, the family proceedings court accounted for 81% of all business dealt with, the High Court accounted for 4% and family care centres accounted for 16%. In 2017, 86% of business was dealt with in the family proceedings court, while the High Court accounted for 3% and family care centres accounted for 11%. The total number of applications disposed of in 2018 increased by 1% compared with 2017 (4,702).

Table F.1: Applications received and disposed of in 2018

		Number of applications received	Number of disposals
Public Law^[1]	Family Proceedings Court	681	416
	Family Care Centre	61	244
	High Court	41	74
	Total	783	734
Private Law^[2]	Family Proceedings Court	3891	3441
	Family Care Centre	204	496
	High Court	122	99
	Total	4217	4036

^[1]Public law = care, supervision, child assessment, education supervision, emergency protection orders, extensions, contact with children in care, secure accommodation.

^[2]Private law = residence, contact, specific issues, prohibited steps, parental responsibility, financial contribution, guardianship, family assistance, non-molestation and occupation orders.

Table F.2: Applications received and disposed of by venue in 2018

		Public Law ^[1]		Private Law ^[2]	
		Number of applications entered	Number of disposals	Number of applications entered	Number of disposals
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	-	1	42	53
	Armagh	-	-	-	-
	Ballymena	74	36	339	261
	Belfast	205	110	1283	1082
	Coleraine	1	2	114	115
	Craigavon	70	36	256	189
	Downpatrick	-	-	6	4
	Dungannon	11	8	78	50
	Enniskillen	-	-	3	1
	Limavady	-	-	1	1
	Lisburn	23	14	289	285
	Londonderry	60	40	322	314
	Magherafelt	-	-	2	2
	Newry	65	33	358	351
	Newtownards	112	66	625	600
	Omagh	60	70	173	133
	Strabane	-	-	-	-
	Venue total	681	416	3891	3441
Family Care Centre	Belfast	41	155	122	334
	Coleraine	-	-	-	-
	Craigavon	15	61	65	96
	Dungannon	1	12	6	23
	Londonderry	4	16	11	43
	Venue total	61	244	204	496
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	41	74	122	99
	Venue total	41	74	122	99
Northern Ireland		783	734	4217	4036

^[1]Public law = care, supervision, child assessment, education supervision, emergency protection orders, extensions, contact with children in care, secure accommodation.

^[2]Private law = residence, contact, specific issues, prohibited steps, parental responsibility, financial contribution, guardianship, family assistance, non-molestation and occupation orders.

Section 2: Reasons for transfer

Complexity accounted for 73% of the reasons quoted for the transfer of cases between courts in 2018 (Table F.3) – 7 percentage points more than in 2017 when 66% (522 out of 788 transfers) were recorded.

Table F.3: Reasons for transfer in 2018

	Complexity	Consolidation	Convenience	Gravity	Jurisdiction	Returned to Lower Court	Separate Representation for Child	Urgency	Point of Law	Public Interest	Other	Total
Family Proceedings	589	75	7	11	84	-	-	11	1	1	2	781
Family Care Centre	91	9	5	2	11	14	-	2	-	-	-	134
High Court	-	1	-	-	2	9	-	-	-	-	-	12
Northern Ireland	680	85	12	13	97	23	-	13	1	1	2	927

Where a court tier / venue is omitted, this indicates a nil return for the period to date.

There may be more than one reason for each case.

From April 2009 data collection methods for transfers changed to incorporate a wider range of reasons.

Section 3: Own motion orders and interim orders

There were 1,122 own motion orders granted in 2018 based on the new methodology of counting orders at the application level. This was a decrease of 12% when comparing with figures for 2017 (based on the new methodology) when 1,282 own motion orders were granted at the application level. To view the back series of orders data using the new methodology please click on the link below Table F.4. Appointment of Guardian ad Litem accounted for 26% and care orders accounted for 9% of orders made while Article 8 Contact orders accounted for 19% and residence orders counted for 11% of own motion orders in 2018 (Table F.4).

Table F.4: Own motion orders granted in 2018 (application level)

	Own motion orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	287
Article 8 Contact	216
Care	105
Child Assessment	7
Contact with a child in care	1
Declaration of Parentage	2
Education Supervision	2
Emergency Protection	13
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	3
Family Assistance	2
Non-Molestation Order	-
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	255
Parental Responsibility	8
Prohibited Steps	43
Recovery	2
Residence	119
Secure Accommodation	7
Specific Issues	38
Supervision	12
Total	1122

These figures may also include some interim orders.

Please note that a new methodology to count orders at the **application level** was introduced. For more information please see page 18 of this publication. Comparisons with previous Judicial Statistics Publications should not be made. A back series of data using the new counting methodology is available at the following location:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

There were 9,198 interim orders made during 2018, which was an increase of 5% on the previous year (8,719) based on the new methodology of counting orders at the application level, 52% were interim care orders and 40% were interim/short term Article 8 Contact orders (Table F.5). To view the back series of orders data using the new methodology please click on the link below Table F.5.

Table F.5: Interim orders granted in 2018 (application level)

	Interim orders
Appointment of Guardian ad Litem	-
Article 8 Contact	3686
Care	4745
Child Assessment	-
Contact with a child in care	-
Contact with a child in care - refusal	-
Contribution and other Financial	-
Education Supervision	-
Emergency Protection	-
Extension of Emergency Protection Order	-
Family Assistance	-
Financial Provision	-
Non-Molestation Order	-
Occupation Articles	-
Other orders, applications etc	-
Parental Responsibility	1
Prohibited Steps	121
Recovery	-
Residence	368
Secure Accommodation	126
Specific Issues	15
Supervision	136
Total	9198

Please note that a new methodology to count orders at the **application level** was introduced. For more information please see page 18 of this publication. Comparisons with previous Judicial Statistics Publications should not be made. A back series of data using the new counting methodology is available at the following location:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

Section 4: Final Orders Made

There were 6,999 final orders made in 2018, an increase of 3% from 6,814 in 2017 based on the new methodology of counting orders at the application level (Table F.6). In 2018, Article 8 Contact orders accounted for 24% and residence orders 13%. To view the back series of orders data using the new methodology please click on the link below Table F.6.

Table F.6: Final Orders Made – 2018 (application level)

Adjourn Generally	36
Article 3 Legal Aid granted	506
Article 8 Contact	1675
Care Order	324
Contact with a child in care	34
Contact with a child in care - refusal	1
Declaration of Parentage	18
Discharge Emergency Protection Order	1
Discharge of a Care Order	77
Discharge of a Contact Order	31
Discharge Interim Contact Order	39
Discharge Non-Molestation/Occupation Order	2
Discharge Prohibited Steps Order	21
Discharge Residence Order	22
Dismissed	266
Education Supervision	26
Emergency Protection Order	86
Emergency Protection Order – out of hours	9
Extension of an Emergency Protection Order	36
Family Assistance Order	7
Financial Provision	4
Leave to assist/arrange for child to live abroad	4
Leave to change surname by which the child is known	3
Leave to remove child from United Kingdom	1
Non-molestation order	3
Order of No Order (Final Order)	72
Other Order	1152
Parental Responsibility Order	112
Prohibited steps	151
Recovery of a child	6
Refusal of Article 3 Legal Aid Certificate	25
Residence Order	913
Residence and Contact Order	1
Secure Accommodation Order	18
Specific Issues	230
Strike Out Order	159
Supervision Order	77
Terminating Appointment of Guardian Ad Litem	355
Withdrawn	496
Total	6999

NB C18 Final Orders were removed as an order on ICOS in September 2009.

Please note that a new methodology to count orders at the **application level** was introduced. For more information please see page 18 of this publication. Comparisons with previous Judicial Statistics Publications should not be made. A back series of data using the new counting methodology is available at the following location:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

Section 5: Age and gender of children

There were a total of 7,174 children involved in Children Order cases during 2018. In total, 36% of these were aged 0-4 and 31% were aged 5-8 (Table F.7).

Table F.7: Age and gender of children in applications disposed of in 2018

	0-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	Total
Male	1277	1105	856	347	3585
Female	1262	1113	762	412	3549
Unknown	26	8	5	1	40
Total ^[1]	2565	2226	1623	760	7174

^[1] In 2012, there was a change in measurement of children involved to include children entered as 'respondent child' on ICOS. In 2018 this accounted for 854 children of the total.

Section 6: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue

The average disposal times for private law cases in 2018 was 33 weeks in the High Court, 53 weeks in the family care centres and 22 weeks in the family proceedings courts. In 2017, the corresponding average disposal times were 33 weeks in the High Court, 42 weeks in family care centres and 19 weeks in the family proceedings courts. Disposal times of cases in the High Court and the family care centres will include the time spent at the lower courts if cases were transferred (Table F.8).

Table F.8: Average time in weeks from lodgement to disposal by venue in 2018

		Public law		Private law	
		Average time weeks	Number of cases	Average time weeks	Number of cases
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	77.9	1	23.3	53
	Armagh	-	-	-	-
	Ballymena	37.3	36	29.7	261
	Belfast	29.7	110	17.5	1082
	Coleraine	23.2	2	24.9	115
	Craigavon	35.8	36	16.4	189
	Downpatrick	-	-	0.0	4
	Dungannon	40.9	8	12.2	50
	Enniskillen	-	-	0.0	1
	Limavady	-	-	0.0	1
	Lisburn	36.8	14	20.6	285
	Londonderry	33.2	40	27.0	314
	Magherafelt	-	-	0.0	2
	Newry	29.4	33	20.7	351
	Newtownards	27.0	66	28.7	600
	Omagh	32.2	70	15.6	133
	Strabane	-	-	-	-
Total	31.7	416	21.9	3441	
Family Care Centre	Belfast	56.2	155	53.7	334
	Coleraine	-	-	-	-
	Craigavon	60.2	61	41.3	96
	Dungannon	58.3	12	51.3	23
	Londonderry	50.5	16	73.6	43
	Total	56.9	244	52.9	496
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	65.2	74	32.5	99
	Total	65.2	74	32.5	99
Northern Ireland		43.5	734	26.0	4036

The time shown will include the time taken at the first court tier.

Section 7: Court sittings and court sitting times

Table F.9 shows the number of sittings where any Children Order business was heard in court. During 2018, the family proceedings courts sat for over 3,000 hours, an increase of 6% on the 2,839 hours in 2017. This was 53% of the total court sitting time for the Children Order in 2018 (56% in 2017).

Table F.9: Court sittings and court sitting times in 2018 (hrs : mins)

		Total court sitting time	Average Children Order court sitting time	Number of court sittings
Family Proceedings Court	Antrim	91:25	3:49	24
	Ballymena	168:12	3:03	55
	Banbridge@Newry	5:10	0:39	8
	Belfast	819:18	3:40	223
	Coleraine	207:06	4:49	43
	Craigavon	182:35	4:03	45
	Downpatrick	0:50	0:50	1
	Dungannon	151:27	3:42	41
	Enniskillen	1:15	0:19	4
	Limavady	0:05	0:05	1
	Lisburn	181:14	2:53	63
	Londonderry	344:41	4:00	86
	Londonderry@Coleraine	39:43	2:50	14
	Newry	248:06	3:21	74
	Newtownards	498:30	3:38	137
	Omagh	61:07	1:32	40
Venue total	3000:44	3:30	859	
Family Care Centre	Antrim	0:47	0:47	1
	Ballymena	6:40	6:40	1
	Belfast	1387:08	3:19	419
	Coleraine	19:12	3:50	5
	Craigavon	225:51	2:16	100
	Dungannon	58:52	2:21	25
	Londonderry	132:31	2:30	53
	Omagh	56:27	2:58	19
	Venue total	1887:28	3:02	623
High Court	Royal Courts of Justice	804:10	1:17	628
	Venue total	804:10	1:17	628
Northern Ireland		5692:22	2:42	2110

A court sitting is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

Children Order sittings refer to a sitting where any Children Order business is heard. Total Children Order time includes all time spent on Children Order business.

High Court Judges, county court judges and district judges (magistrates' court) sit on Children Order business.

Part G: Miscellaneous

The Enforcement of Judgments Office

The Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO) is essentially a centralised unit for enforcing judgments of the courts. The EJO's powers and procedures are contained in the Judgments Enforcement (Northern Ireland) Order 1981, and Judgment Enforcement Rules (Northern Ireland) 1981. The EJO also enforces other types of civil judgments such as those that are connected with the possession of land and property.

Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners

Social Security Commissioners hear appeals from Appeal Tribunals in relation to matters arising under the social security system. Child Support Commissioners hear appeals from Child Support Appeal Tribunals.

Pensions Appeal Tribunal

This Tribunal hears appeals from ex-servicemen or women who have had their claims for a War Pension rejected by the Secretary of State for Defence. Its jurisdiction covers Northern Ireland. The Tribunal is independent from the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. Hearings have been in existence, as part of the Lord Chancellor's responsibility, since the War Pensions Act 1919.

The War Pensions Scheme started in 1918 and continues in respect of injuries that occurred before 5 April 2005. For injuries after 5 April 2005 a new Scheme, the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme applies. The Tribunal deals with appeals for both Schemes.

The War Pensions Scheme

- Whether a person is entitled to a War Pension;
- The percentage at which the War Pensions Agency has assessed a person's disablement; or
- Whether a person is entitled to an allowance e.g. for mobility needs.

Or

The Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

- Whether a person is entitled to an award; or
- The amount of the award.

These Tribunals deal with appeals against certain decisions the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency have made on War Disablement Pensions. A Tribunal normally consists of three members – a qualified lawyer, a qualified medical practitioner and a member who served in the armed forces. **It is independent of the Government and, in particular, the Ministry of Defence.** The law about rights to appeal is set out in the Pensions Appeal Tribunals Acts 1943 and 1949 (as amended), known as 'the Acts' and in the Armed Forces (Pensions and Compensation) Act 2004. You can appeal to the Tribunal against certain decisions taken by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency. The decisions you can appeal against are set out in the Acts.

In general terms, Pensions Appeal Tribunals hear appeals under both the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme and the War Pensions Scheme. The War Pensions Scheme has three main types of appeals- “entitlement appeals”, “assessment appeals” and “specified decision appeals”.

What is an entitlement appeal?

An entitlement appeal is concerned with whether a person qualifies for a pension. For example, an entitlement appeal might decide whether or not your (or your late husband’s or wife’s) medical condition was caused, or made worse, by service in the armed forces or the merchant navy.

What is an assessment appeal?

An assessment appeal is about the percentage of disablement caused or made worse by service. This affects the amount, if any, of War Disablement Pension which might be paid but the Pensions Appeal Tribunal does not itself make decisions about the amount of money to be paid.

What is a specified decision appeal?

A specified decision appeal is concerned with entitlement to various allowances, supplements, extra pensions, awards, expenses, maintenance, deductions and payments. In this publication we cannot set out every specified decision, but a complete list is given in the Pensions Appeal Tribunals (Additional Rights of Appeal) Regulations 2001 (S.I.2001 No. 1031).

Coroners

Coroners are independent judicial officers who are available to deal with matters relating to deaths that may require further investigation to establish the cause of death.

Coroners in Northern Ireland can either be barristers or solicitors and are appointed by the Lord Chancellor.

What do Coroners do?

Coroners inquire into deaths reported to them that appear to be:

- unexpected or unexplained,
- as a result of violence,
- an accident,
- as a result of negligence,
- from any cause other than natural illness or disease, or
- in circumstances that require investigation.

The Coroner will seek to establish the cause of death and will make whatever inquiries are necessary to do this e.g. ordering a postmortem examination, obtaining witness statements and medical records, or holding an inquest.

The Coroners Service is headed by a High Court Judge and there are three Coroners. In addition, there are twelve salaried judges who hold the role of coroner concurrently with their other judicial post.

Key facts

- The number of notices of intention to enforce lodged and the number of applications for enforcement accepted both decreased over the last 5 years. Between 2014 and 2016, notices of intention to enforce lodged decreased by 61% before increasing by 29% between 2016 and 2018. Applications for enforcement accepted decreased by 71% between 2014 and 2016, before increasing by 35% between 2016 and 2018. Across the five years notices of intention to enforce lodged and applications for enforcement accepted, decreased by 49% and 61% respectively.
- The number of applications for leave to appeal to the Social Security Commissioners lodged and the number cleared have generally decreased over the last five years. The number lodged decreased by 23% overall between 2014 and 2018 and the number cleared decreased by 36% overall.
- The number of appeals to Social Security Commissioners lodged decreased by 6% and the number cleared decreased by 31% in the last five years, with appeals lodged at their highest levels in 2014 and appeals cleared also peaking in 2014.
- The number of inquests held relating to the Coroners Service for Northern Ireland fluctuated between 2014 and 2018, with an overall decrease of 17%, between 2014 and 2018.

Summary Table 14: Enforcement of Judgments Office, Social Security Commissioners, Pension Appeal Tribunals and Coroners 2014 to 2018

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
EJO	Notices of Intention to enforce lodged	19,564	10,184	7,682	11,205	9,933
	Applications for enforcement accepted	12,651	6,623	3,675	5,987	4,952
	Repossessions Completed ^[1]	1,216	646	465	337	353
Social Security Commissioners	Leave to appeal to Commissioners lodged	178	163	132	126	137
	Leave to appeal to Commissioners cleared	161	152	165	126	103
	Appeals to Commissioners lodged	82	79	81	76	77
	Appeals to Commissioners cleared	95	77	92	79	66
Pension Appeal Tribunals^[2]	Entitlement Appeals lodged	50	49	46	39	57
	Entitlement Appeals cleared	34	33	47	46	41
	Assessment Appeals lodged	73	50	64	56	72
	Assessment Appeals cleared	45	47	52	59	58
	Specified Decision Appeals lodged	13	9	12	3	6
	Specified Decision Appeals cleared	10	8	9	8	5
	Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Appeals lodged	16	14	21	16	20
	Armed Forces Compensation Scheme Appeals cleared	10	8	6	16	20
Coroners	Number of deaths reported	3,910	3,954	4,025	4,089	4,119
	Number of inquests held	120	93	120	130	100
	No inquest with post mortem	1,078	1,171	1,011	1,081	1,116
	No inquest and no post mortem	1,949	2,004	2,297	2,311	2,386
	Other disposals of registered entries	647	669	555	594	489

^[1]Figures for Repossessions Completed from 2007 to 2012 have been revised due to the removal of duplicate records identified within the dataset. The changes to the figures have been slight and in accordance with our revisions policy these have been updated and marked as having been revised. (Repossessions were previously referred to as evictions).

For more information on our revisions policy click here:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/nicts-statistics-and-research-useful-documents>

A back series of revised figures can be viewed by clicking here:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/articles/nicts-statistics-and-research>

^[2]NICTS took over responsibility for Pension Appeal Tribunals in 2007.

Miscellaneous – 2018 Data

Section 1: Enforcement of Judgments Office

Since the early 1970s, the task of enforcing civil judgments in Northern Ireland has been simplified by the creation of the Enforcement of Judgments Office (EJO), which operates under the supervision of the Master (Enforcement of Judgments), assisted by the Chief Enforcement Officer. In 2018, 9,933 notices of intention to enforce were lodged and 4,952 applications for enforcement were accepted (Table G.1), a decrease of 11% from 11,205 and a decrease of 17% from 5,987 respectively in 2017.

Table G.1: Enforcement orders made and applications for enforcement in 2018

Method of search	
By EJO staff	308
On-line (by customers)	73909
Notices of intention:	
Notices Issued	9933
Applications for enforcement:	
Applications accepted	4952
Types of application	
Article 23 discovery	280
Money judgment	4094
Possession judgment	565
Possession of Goods	13
Total	4952

Table G.2 shows the 'Debt Ratio' which is the amount of debt recovered for every £1 paid in enforcement fees. In 2018, this was £6.08 whereas in 2017 this was £6.36.

Table G.2: Money judgments and debt ratio in 2018

Original debt lodged	£8,259,979.77
EJO fees paid	£1,088,866.03
Total debt registered	£9,348,845.30
Total debt recovered	£6,620,147.38
% of debt recovered	70.81%
Debt ratio	£6.08

A possession file is deemed 'completed' when –

- A repossession takes place.
- The creditor withdraws their application.
- An official arrangement between the creditor and debtor is made (these cases may be re-activated if the arrangement breaks down).

Table G.3 shows that during 2018, 621 cases were completed. This represents an increase of less than one per cent from the 2017 figure of 617, with repossessions increasing by 5% over the last year, from 337 in 2017 to 353 in 2018.

Table G.3 Possession judgments in 2018

Repossessions completed^[1]	353
Cases withdrawn	51
Arrangement in place (case held)	217
Total	621

^[1] Repossessions completed were previously referred to as evictions completed

Section 2: Social Security Commissioners and Child Support Commissioners and Pension Appeals Tribunals

There were 137 applications for leave to appeal to the Social Security Commissioners lodged during 2018, 11 more than the 126 lodged during 2017. There were 103 applications for leave cleared in 2018 compared with 126 cleared during 2017 (Table G.4).

Table G.4: Social Security Commissioners' applications for leave to appeal to the Commissioners in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	137	3	100	103

The number of appeals to the Commissioners lodged increased from 76 in 2017 to 77 in 2018. In total, 66 were cleared in 2018 compared with 79 in 2017 (Table G.5).

Table G.5: Social Security Commissioners' appeals to the Commissioners in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	77	10	56	66

Table G.6 shows the number of applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2018.

Table G.6: Social Security Commissioners' Applications to the Commissioners for leave to appeal to the Court of Appeal in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	-	-	-	-

Tables G.7 to G.13 show the caseload of Pensions Appeal Tribunals in 2018. 41 entitlement appeals and 58 assessment appeals were dealt with in 2018. Corresponding figures for 2017 were 46 and 59 respectively. The majority of assessment appeals (72%) were dealt with after a hearing, compared to 75% in 2017.

Table G.7: Pensions Appeal Tribunals entitlement appeals in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	57	29	12	41

Table G.8: Pensions Appeal Tribunals assessment appeals in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	72	42	16	58

Table G.9: Pensions Appeal Tribunals specified decision appeals in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	6	4	1	5

Table G.10: Pensions Appeal Tribunals armed forces compensation scheme appeals in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	20	9	11	20

Table G.11: Pensions Appeal Tribunals late appeals in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	3	4	3	7

Table G.12: Pensions Appeal Tribunals jurisdiction appeals in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	1	-	1	1

Table G.13: Pensions Appeal Tribunals leave to appeal applications in 2018

	Lodged	Cleared		
		After hearing	Without hearing	Total Cleared
2018	-	-	-	-

Section 3: Coroners Service for Northern Ireland

Table G.14 shows the Coroners' caseload for 2018. There was an increase of less than one percent in the number of deaths reported to the Coroner between 2017 and 2018 (4,119 in 2018 compared to 4,089 in 2017). The number of inquests decreased from 130 in 2017 to 100 in 2018.

Table G.14: Coroners' caseload in 2018

Number of deaths reported	4119
Number of inquests held	100
No inquest with post mortem	1116
No inquest and no post mortem	2386
Other disposals of registered entries	489

Appendix 1: Judge court sitting days

Judge type	Business area ^[1]	Sitting days
High Court Judge	Crown	160
	Queen's Bench	433
	Children Order	310
	Other Family	59
	Appeals	24
	Chancery	232
	Bails	345
	Callover	1
	Judicial Reviews	243
	Court of Appeal - Civil	111
Court of Appeal - Criminal	83	
Total		2001
County Court Judge	Crown Court	2101
	County court judge day	1193
District Judge	County court judge day	183
	District judge day	594
Deputy District Judge	District judge day	21
Deputy County Court Judge	County court judge day	151 ^[2]
Total		4243
District Judge (Magistrates' Court)	Criminal	2895
	Youth	340
	Civil/Family	879
Total		4114
Social Security Commissioners	Oral hearings	19
Total		19
Total number of sitting days		10377

^[1]Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken, except for the Magistrates' court. In the Magistrates' court, days are classified based on the earliest scheduled sitting, except when the start time for two or more sittings is the same, in which case the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken.

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

^[2]Includes 69 days when a Deputy County Court Judge sat on Crown Court Business.

Glossary of terms

Adjourn Generally

A putting off or postponing of proceedings.

Acquittal

A judgement or verdict that a person is not guilty of the crime with which they have been charged.

Additional sitting

These are additional court sittings, not included within the regular court calendar, but planned in advance of the date of the sitting.

Adult Magistrates' Business

Magistrates' court criminal business in which the defendant is aged 18 years or over on the date on which they committed the offence.

Amount awarded

This relates to the monetary value awarded in cases such as small claims and ordinary civil bills. On occasion the amount awarded may be unliquidated which means that the claim was not made for a specific amount of money, but rather, for example, damage caused to a property, for repairs for damage caused or for faulty workmanship.

Ancillary application

An additional application made in existing proceedings.

Ancillary relief application

During or after a divorce, the annulment of a marriage (nullity) or judicial separation, there may still be a need for the court to settle disputes over money or property. The court can make a financial order. This is known as ancillary relief and may deal with the sale or transfer of property, maintenance payments (for example weekly or monthly maintenance), a lump sum payment and/or a pension sharing or attachment order.

Application

The act of applying to court to ask it to do something, for example to start proceedings or make an order.

Application for leave to apply for judicial review

The first step in the judicial review procedure involves the mandatory 'leave stage'. At this stage an application for leave to bring judicial review proceedings must first be made. The leave stage is used to identify and filter out, at an early stage, claims which may be trivial or without merit.

Appointment of Guardian ad Litem

Appointment of a guardian by the court - The High Court or a county court may appoint an individual to be a child's guardian if the child has no parent with parental responsibility for him or a residence order has been made with respect to the child in favour of a parent or guardian of his who has died while the order was in force. A person appointed as a guardian under this Article shall have parental responsibility for the child.

Arraignment

The procedure by which the defendant has criminal charges formally put to him before the judge at the Crown Court and he enters his plea of guilty or not guilty.

Article 53 Contact with a child in care

Where a child is in care of an authority, the authority shall (subject to the provisions of this article) allow the child reasonable contact with: (a) parents; (b) any guardian; (c) persons named in residence orders made immediately prior to the child being placed in care; and (d) persons who had care of the child by virtue of an order made in the exercise of the High Court's inherent jurisdiction immediately before the care order was made.

Article 8 Contact

Relates to Article 8 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. A 'contact order' means an order requiring the person with whom a person lives, or is to live, to allow the child to visit or stay with a person named in the order, or for that person and the child to have contact with each other.

Bail variation

A change in the conditions of bail.

Call-over

An occasion in court where dates for all the cases in the next few months are fixed. It is important for the parties or their lawyers to attend the call-over.

Care Order

A care order places a child in the care of a designated authority. A court may only make a care order if it is satisfied the child is suffering or at risk of harm etc.

Case

The proceedings, arguments and evidence in court and the court hearing.

Child Assessment

Application by an authority to request an order to authorise an assessment of a child's circumstances.

Certificate of automatic discharge (Bankruptcy)

A document certifying the period of bankruptcy is at an end

Certificate of Readiness (COR)

When a small claim or civil bill is contested by the respondent, the matter will proceed to the county court for judgment. Before the case can be heard, both parties must contribute to the completion of a Certificate of Readiness (COR) which informs the court that the cases is ready to heard and can therefore be listed by the court for hearing.

Charge sheet

A charge sheet is a method by which PSNI can put charge(s) to a defendant and on which they will either release the defendant on police bail to appear at court within 28 days of the charging or they can detain the defendant in custody to produce them before a court at the earliest opportunity.

Civil and Family application

These are applications in relation to Children Order, domestic and family homes and domestic violence proceedings.

Commercial actions

The definition of 'commercial action' is broad and so a wide range of cases may be dealt with under those arrangements. Broadly speaking, they include any transaction or dispute of a commercial or business nature.

Committal

The procedure by which a person is returned for trial to the Crown Court by the magistrates' court, if the magistrates' court is satisfied that there is a case to answer.

Compassionate bail application

An application for bail, usually for a short period of time, for personal reasons, such as to attend a family funeral.

County Court Judge (CCJ)

This is a judge who sits in the County Court and the Crown Court. In the County Court, they will sit on business such as ordinary civil bills (with a value over £10,000 and up to £30,000), criminal damage, licences, equity, ejection and divorces.

Court Disposal

Includes all cases issued with a final order by a Judge.

Court order

The enforceable decision of the court.

Creditor

A person who is owed money by a debtor.

Criminal Damage

These are cases in which there is an allegation that a property has been destroyed or damaged or where a person is alleged to have made threats, had intent, or was found to have anything on their property with intent to cause damage to another property.

Day sat

This is a day on which a judge sat to hear court business. The information is organised into the various types of court business that a judge hears. The judge's day may consist of one or more sittings, at one or more court venues.

Declaration of Parentage order

Order made to determine parentage on foot of an application for maintenance in respect of a person who denies that he/she is a parent of the child.

Debtor

A person who owes money to a creditor.

Decree Absolute

The decree absolute is the legal document that ends your marriage. You need to wait at least 6 weeks after the date of the decree nisi before you can apply for a decree absolute.

Decree Nisi

A document that says that the court doesn't see any reason why you can't divorce.

If your husband or wife doesn't agree to the divorce, you can still apply for a decree nisi. However, you'll have to go to a hearing at the court to discuss the case, where a judge will decide whether to grant you a decree nisi.

Default Judgment

This is a judgment in favour of one party due to some failure to take action by the other party. In most cases this will be a judgment in favour of the applicant due to the failure of the respondent to contest the claim brought against them. The failure to take action is the default. The default judgment is the relief requested in the party's original petition.

Departmental prosecution

Departmental prosecutions are for criminal offences which are investigated by a department or other non-police body and prosecuted by either the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) or a separate prosecutorial body (e.g. motor tax evasion which is prosecuted by the Department of the Environment).

Disposed

The date the case is finally dealt with via a court or non-court result and the case is no longer in the court process.

District Judge (DJ)

This is a judge who sits in the County Court or Magistrates' Court. In the County Court they will sit on business such as small claims and ordinary civil bills (with a value up to £10,000).

Divorces

These are proceedings initiated in order to dissolve a marriage. Dissolutions of civil partnerships are also included within these figures. Following the issue of a divorce petition in the High Court, if it is a defended case it will be heard in the High Court and if it is an undefended case it may be heard either in the High Court or the County Court (depending on the choice of the individuals involved). Initially a Decree Nisi, judicial separation or nullity is granted, which is an initial order for divorce. Providing that no reason is provided to the court to challenge the nisi, a Decree Absolute, which is a final order for divorce that dissolves a marriage and permits an individual party to remarry, is made. A defended divorce is a proceeding in which an individual (the petitioner) applies for a divorce and the other party (the respondent) indicates that they wish to contest a divorce being granted at all, or on the reasons stated by the petitioner.

Domestic proceeding (including FHDV orders, Non molestation, Occupation, Vary discharge)

These are orders made in respect of applications made under the Family Homes and Domestic Violence (Northern Ireland) Order 1998. These orders include non-molestation and/or occupation orders. A non-molestation order is made for the protection of the applicant and may prohibit the respondent from carrying out particular actions or behaviours and may include an exclusion zone. Occupation orders provide for the rights of the application to peacefully occupy a particular property without interference from the respondent. These orders may be varied to add or remove particular requirements and the order can also be discharged by the court bring the terms of the order to an end.

Education Supervision order

Puts the child under the supervision of a designated education and library board. The education and library board may make an application in respect of a child of compulsory school age who is not being educated properly.

Ejectment

A legal document which seeks to recover possession of land and/or a dwelling house (e.g. where a tenant has stopped paying rent). Similar matters relating to properties owned with a mortgage are dealt with through proceedings within the Chancery Division of the High Court.

Emergency Protection order

Gives the applicant parental responsibility for a child under the age of 18. It authorises the removal of the child at any time to accommodation provided by or on behalf of the applicant, and being kept there. The court may make 'an emergency protection order' if it is satisfied that there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant harm.

EPA applications

Application to register an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA).

Equity

Any type of proceeding which seeks a court judgement on disputes relating to property disputes i.e. who owns it, and should damages be paid.

Ex-parte application

An application made to a judge by a party to a case without the other parties being required to be there.

Family Assistance order

This is a short term order made by agreement, under which an authority is required to make available a suitably qualified person to advise, assist and (where appropriate) befriend any person named in the order.

Family Business

Non-criminal court proceedings generally relating to matters between a husband and wife, common-law partners, or children.

Family Care Centre

A county court which generally hears appeals from Family Proceedings Courts, or family cases which are more complex in nature.

Family Proceedings Court

A court of summary jurisdiction (constituted as a Youth Magistrates Court) which hears proceedings under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 e.g. residence, contact with children.

Family Magistrates' Business

Family business in the Magistrate's Court (the Family Proceedings Court) covers applications brought in respect of the care and welfare of children, domestic proceedings and applications for non-molestation and/or occupation orders.

Financial Provision order

An order requiring either or both parents to make periodical payments or a lump sum payment to the applicant (the person with whom the child resides) for the benefit of the child.

Finding

This is the date on which a defendant is either found guilty or not guilty of having committed the offence alleged in either the summons or charge sheet.

First hearing

This is the date on which a case first appears in court.

First listing

The date of first hearing of a case.

Fixed penalty default

This is a fixed penalty which has been issued for a minor motoring offence and which has not been paid by the payment due date and has therefore gone into default. At this stage a summons is issued to bring the matter before the court to have a Judge set the default terms for non-payment.

Foreign judgement

An Act to make provision for the enforcement in the United Kingdom of judgments given in foreign countries, which accord reciprocal treatment to judgments given in the United Kingdom, and vice versa.

Hearing

The trial of a case or preliminary issue in court.

High Court Judge (HCJ)

A judge who sits in the High Court and Crown Court to hear and determine civil, family and criminal business.

Hybrid charge

This is also referred to as a 'triable-either-way' offence. A criminal offence that may be prosecuted either summarily (in the magistrates' court) or on indictment (in the Crown Court). In the majority of cases, the prosecution decides how the offence is tried depending on the seriousness of the offence.

Indictable charge

A serious criminal offence where the defendant is usually tried in the Crown Court.

Indictable triable summarily charge

A serious criminal offence where a defendant can be tried in the Crown Court but may in some instances be tried in a magistrates' court.

Injunction

A legal order which stops someone from doing or continuing to do something, or which requires them to take certain positive action.

Interlocutory application

An application made at any time after proceedings have issued and before the final hearing. For example, a challenge to one party's refusal to give discovery, or an application for substituted service are interlocutory applications.

Issue

This is the process by which a complaint or claim is lodged with the court. It can also be described as the 'Received Date'.

Judicial Review

A procedure by which someone can challenge in the High Court, the decisions or actions of:-

- A Government Department
- A public body
- The Magistrates' Court
- The County Court
- Certain tribunals

Judicial Review is only available if there is no other legal remedy.

Judicial separation

An alternative to divorce is a decree of judicial separation. This does not dissolve the marriage but absolves the parties from the obligation to live together. This procedure might, for instance, be used if religious beliefs forbid or discourage divorce.

Justice & Security Act 2007

Legislation which replaced the Terrorism Act 2000 which makes provision for non-jury trials.

Leave to change surname by which child is known

An application for leave (permission) to change a child's name without a parent's consent. The court will give permission if it believes it is in the child's best interests to allow the name change.

Licences

These are applications for intoxicating liquor licences and certificates of registration for public houses and clubs, enabling their legal operation.

Lodge documents

Send documents to the court office.

Master

A judicial post, where the individual must have been a legal practitioner for at least 10 years. The Master determines a range of court proceedings in the High Court, and manages procedural elements of more complex cases before they are heard by a High Court judge.

Matrimonial Application

These are applications attached to divorce proceedings such as Ancillary Relief applications that relate to financial relief to one or both parties following a petition for divorce, for example, maintenance and the division of property/finances.

Monies due

Financial compensation or money owed.

Negligence

Conduct that falls below the standards of behaviour established by law for the protection of others against unreasonable risk of harm. A person has acted negligently if he or she has departed from the conduct expected of a reasonably prudent person acting under similar circumstances.

NOD

When a small claim is taken by an applicant against a respondent, the respondent may contest the claim and signal their intention to dispute the claim through a Notice of Dispute. This means that the case will then be listed before a judge in court for resolution.

Non court disposal

Includes all disposals not completed in court, for example settlements or withdrawals.

Non molestation order

This order prevents a person from molesting another person with whom they have had a relationship or they are related to.

Molestation encompasses any form of serious pestering or harassment and applies to any conduct which could properly be regarded as such a degree of harassment as to call for the intervention of the court. A 'non-molestation' order may contain one or both of the following:

- (a) A provision prohibiting a person from molesting another person.
- (b) A provision prohibiting the respondent from molesting a child.

Notice of appointment

The notification of a date, time and location for a court hearing.

Notice of Intention to Defend (NID)

When a civil bill is taken by an applicant against a respondent, the respondent may contest the claim and signal their intention to dispute the claim through a Notice of Intention to Defend. This means that the case will then go to the court for resolution.

Notice of motion

A notification issued to one or more parties by the individual or company that has filed a motion before a court, with a date for hearing which will take place on the date stated on the notice.

No Value

No Value includes unliquidated cases and cases with no amount awarded recorded on ICOS. No amount awarded can arise when a case has been settled and the value was not notified to the court or the terms of the settlement do not include a monetary value.

Nullity

A Decree of Nullity of Marriage is granted where the petitioner proves that the marriage is either void or voidable. A void marriage is one which should never have been celebrated (by reason of the relationship or incapacity of the parties and which therefore never had legal status). A voidable marriage is one which is legal but may be nullified by order of the court.

Occupation order

Occupation orders declare, confer or regulate occupation (not ownership) rights in the family home between those in certain family or domestic relationships. These orders, if combined with a non-molestation order, may be used for protective purposes. Alternatively, they may be used to declare or regulate the right of occupation in the home in cases where protection is not an issue. An occupation order is available between parties who have had a relationship or are related.

Office disposal

See 'Non court disposal'.

Order 53 Statement

The document which starts a judicial review case. It is named after Order 53 of the Rules of the Court of Judicature, which states what must be in an Order 53 Statement.

Ordinary application

See 'Application'.

Ordinary civil bills

A legal document which seeks to recover damages for (i) personal injury claims (injuries caused by negligence), for example, traffic accidents, falls on pavements and accidents at work and (ii) consumer disputes, for example, faulty goods or services. There have been a number of changes in the threshold for ordinary civil bills in recent years. Until 25 February 2013 ordinary civil bills related to cases seeking damages between £3,000 and £15,000 (prior to May 2011, the lower limit was £2,000). Following changes made on 25 February 2013, the upper limit for civil bills was extended to include cases seeking damages between £3,000 and £30,000.

Originating application

The first, provisional, or primary application in a legal process.

Originating motion

A document which starts some kinds of High Court cases, described in Rules of the Court of Judicature Order 5, rule 5 and Order 8.

Originating summons

A document which starts some kinds of High Court cases, described in Rules of the Court of Judicature Order 5, rule 3 and Order 8.

Outstanding case

A case that is currently active, for example, live cases not yet disposed.

Parental Responsibility order

Outlines the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his / her property. It may also include certain rights which a guardian may exercise.

Party

The plaintiff, defendant or third or other party in a court case.

Petition

The document which starts a divorce or civil partnership dissolution case, and some other kinds of cases, described in Rules of the Court of Judicature, Order 9 and the Family Proceedings Rules.

Penalty Notice for Disorder

These are diversionary disposals aimed at dealing with minor offences, such as non-motoring offences, as a direct alternative to a prosecution before the court.

Penalty Notice for Disorder Default

This is a penalty notice for disorder which has been issued for a defined offence and which has not been paid by the payment due date and has therefore gone into default. At this stage a summons is issued to bring the matter before the court to have a Judge set the default terms for non-payment.

Plea

The response a defendant gives after criminal charges have been put to him e.g. "guilty" or "not guilty."

Proceedings

A shorthand term for all the court procedures and documents before the final court order.

Prohibited steps order

An order which prevents a parent from taking specific actions as part of their normal parental responsibilities to a child.

PSNI/PPS prosecution

These are prosecutions for criminal offences which were investigated by Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and prosecuted by Public Prosecution Service (PPS).

Received

The date papers are lodged with the court.

Recovery order

An order which generally directs the return of a child who has been taken away unlawfully; has run away or is missing. The order may permit certain actions to be taken (like entering property) to enable it to be carried out.

Remittal

The process of transferring a case to a lower court e.g. transferring a case from the High Court to the County Court.

Removal

The process of transferring a case to a higher court e.g. transferring a case from the County Court to the High Court.

Residence order

An order detailing with whom a child shall live. This is generally following the breakdown of a relationship, but can arise in other circumstances e.g. if the child's parents have died.

Revoke

To invalidate or cause to no longer be in effect, as by voiding or canceling.

Scheduled

A scheduled offence is one which is listed in Schedule 9 of the Terrorism Act 2000 and which, if it is tried on indictment, will be heard by a judge sitting without a jury. This has been replaced by the Justice and Security Act 2007.

Scheduled sitting

This is a regular court sitting that is included within the court calendar.

Secure Accommodation order

Accommodation provided for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, designed to restrict liberty.

Setting down

Telling the court office a case is ready for hearing.

Sitting

This is a period of work by a judge in a single courtroom on a single day. Several types of business may be heard at one sitting. Business heard in different courtrooms, whether at the same venue or elsewhere, is counted as separate sittings.

Sitting Days

A court sitting day is counted as any day where the judiciary sit in court. It is a period of work by a judge on a single day. Multiple sittings on one calendar date will be aggregated into one sitting day based on the Judicial officer, venue and sitting date. Several types of business may be heard within one sitting day. Days are classified on the basis of the majority business undertaken, except for the Magistrates court. It is based in the first instance, on the earliest scheduled sitting and where the start time for 2 or more sittings is the same, the days are classified on the majority of business undertaken. It does not include time in chambers or days where the judiciary are sitting in chambers.

Small claims

Small claims allow certain types of claims to be decided informally by the county court, usually without the need of a solicitor or barrister. In general a small claim is one where the value to be claimed is not more than £3,000 (before May 2011 the upper limit was £2,000). Examples of small claims are (i) compensation for faulty services by, for example, builders, dry cleaners and garages (ii) compensation for faulty goods such as electrical goods (iii) disputes between landlords and tenants for rent arrears or compensation for not doing repairs and (iv) debts or wages owed or money in lieu of notice.

Special sitting

These are additional unplanned court sittings, not included within the regular court calendar, that are required to hear unforeseen business, such as dealing with a defendant on a weekend or public holiday.

Specific issue order

An order which addresses a specific matter that has arisen relating to the parental responsibility of a child e.g. which school shall they attend; what religion shall they be brought up in.

Strike out order

Striking out means the court ordering written material to be deleted so that it may no longer be relied upon.

Summary charge

This is an offence which is triable in a magistrates' court.

Summons (civil)

A summons is served on a person involved in a legal proceeding and it indicates legal action may be in progress against the person, or the person's presence as witness may be required.

The summons usually announces a date by which the person or persons summoned must either appear in court, or respond in writing to the court or the opposing party or parties.

Summons (criminal)

This is the method by which a complaint is made to require a defendant to appear before a court in respect of particular charge(s). The details of the charge(s) will be contained on the summons as well as the first date and place at which the defendant is to attend court.

Supervision Order

Puts a child under the supervision of a designated authority. A supervision order may require a child:

- (i) To comply with direction given by a supervisor as regards residence, reporting and participating in activities.
- (ii) To keep the supervisor informed of any change in address and allow the supervisor to visit at the place where he is living.

Time intervals

This is the time taken (in weeks) between the case, application or claim being received by the court and the date it is finally resolved, by either the court, an arrangement between parties out of court or by being withdrawn by the applicant.

Unliquidated

An unliquidated sum is one for which the precise amount owed cannot be determined from the terms of the contractual agreement or another standard.

Winding up petition

An application to court seeking the liquidation of a company.

Withdrawn

An order which removes a case from court, for a variety of reasons. The court action then ceases.

Writ

A document which starts a case in the Queen's Bench Division.

Youth Magistrates' Business

Magistrates' court criminal business in which the defendant is aged between 10 and 18 years on the date on which they committed the offence.



Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
Laganside House
23-27 Oxford Street
Belfast
BT1 3LA



<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/topics/courts-and-tribunals>